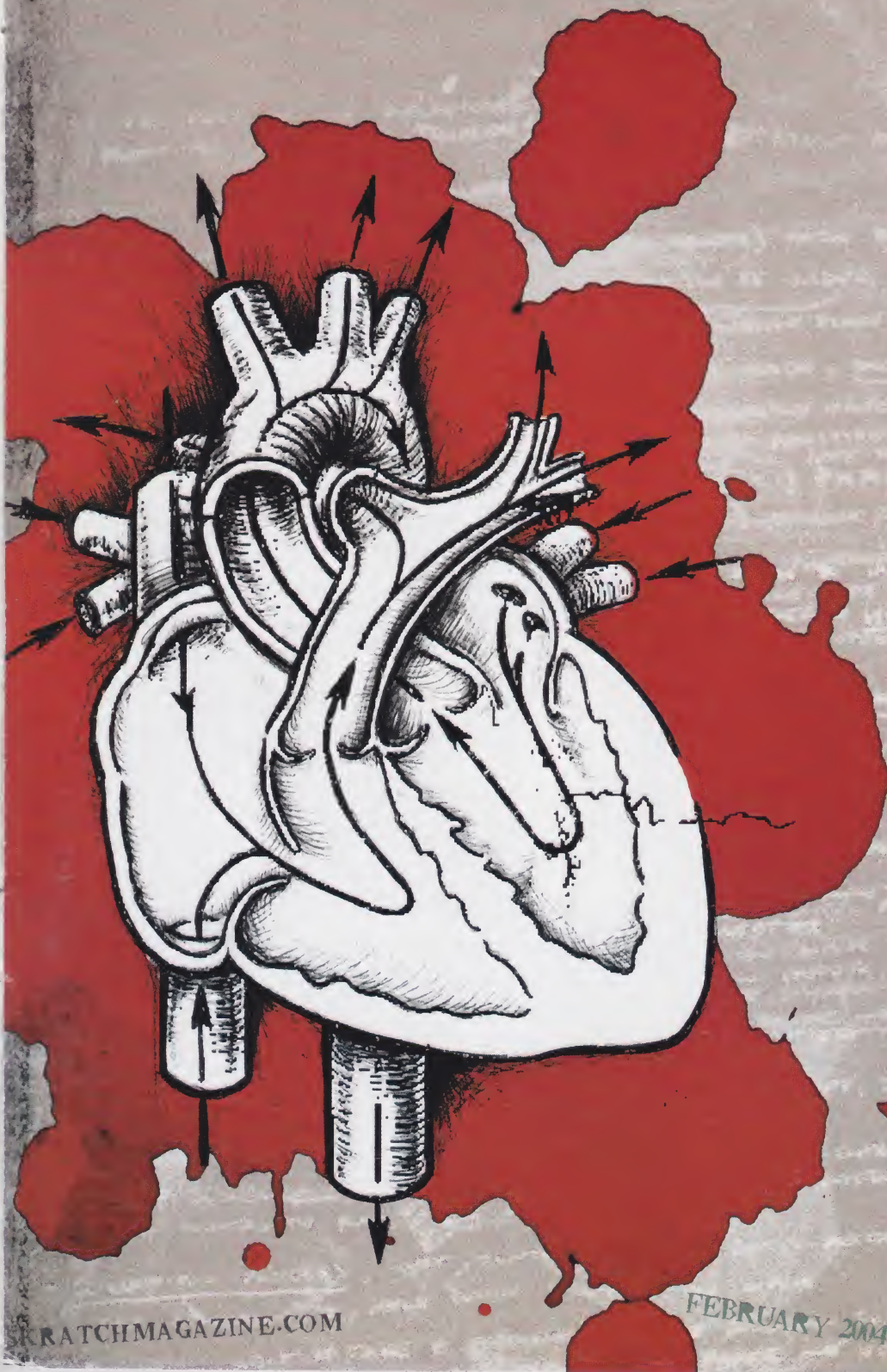


SKRATCH

ISSUE #96



THE FORMAT
THE CASUALTIES
10 FOOT POLE
SCARS OF TOMORROW
MIKE PARK
THE HIGHER
THE PALE
ANADIVINE
CRIME IN STEREO
HARKONEN
BLACK CROSS
THE PUTONS
PREMONITIONS OF WAR
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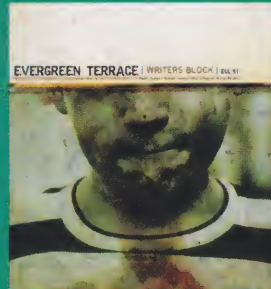
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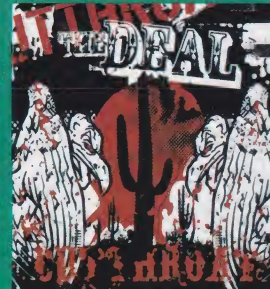
BLOODY SUNDAY



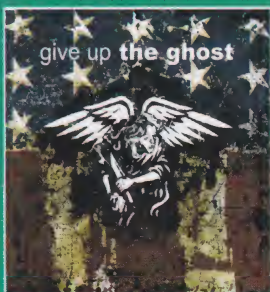
HORRORPOPS



EVERGREEN TERRACE



THE DEAL



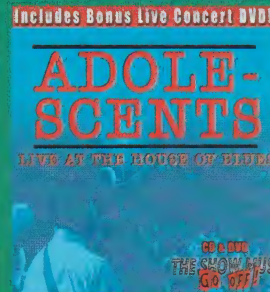
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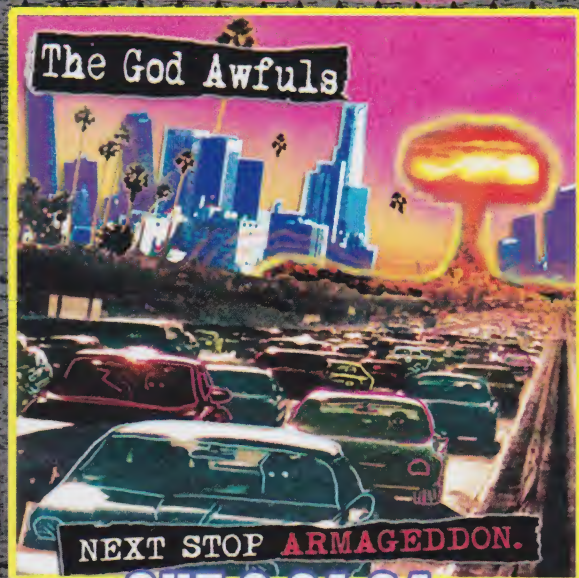
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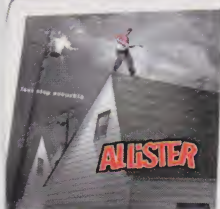
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from a second story window
bound in blood

SAT FEB 21

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MAS YODON

Red Tape
To the Grave
radiation 4



SUN FEB 22

HASTE the DAY

Tire Iron
Bowels of Judas
Oblige
Trauma
Bloodshed on Earth

FRI FEB 27

No Bragging Rights
Broken Horizon
Hit the Switch
Grounded
Preston

WED FEB 25



SUB HUMANS

NAKED
AGGRESSION
Caustic Christ

THURS FEB 26

SUB HUMANS

NAKED
AGGRESSION
New Mexican Disaster Squad



SAT FEB 28

401 Waterman
Riverside Drive
Wester
Bobby Breakdown
This Time Tomorrow
The Vice Versa

SUN FEB 29

when beauty fades
knuclopuck
jack the bear
sir omelete
TLO
bad decision
klutch
final solution
the quirks
tydie
the shocking details
magnolias


WED MAR 3

BLEED THE SKY
DREDLOK
OPAQUE
KILL FRANKLYN
PROPHET OF SUN

FRI MAR 5

No Alliance
The Squares
Stuck In Adolescence
Adam In Evil
Mudskipper
Broken Horizon
A Moment Spent
Shaunteclair
A Futile Existence
The Concrete Alarmists
Allusions of
1929

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Syx

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Tazumal
The Illuminate
the knife in Iris
Moonstalkers
The great awakening
Fellway

SUN MAR 14

TERROR

Shattered Realm
The Promise
Born From Pain
First Blood
where eagles dare


FRI MAR 19


HEMLOCK
Driven AD
Jhambie

SAT MAR 20

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The Bled
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A Fall Farewell
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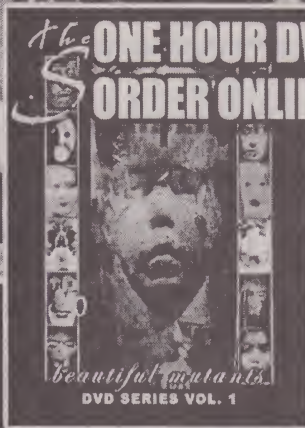
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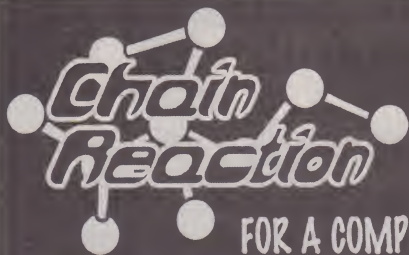
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WED-FEB 18	INDIE ROCK \$8 Avery is Noise Counterfit Limousine Park • Jenoh	FRI-FEB 20	SOLD OUT !!! Converge Curl Up and Die First Blood Find Him and Kill Him Bleeding Kansas	SAT-FEB 21	SOLD OUT !!! Converge Curl Up and Die TAKEN • Loftus Final Burden
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15	16	17 Two Dollar Tuesday \$2.00 draft beer \$2.00 Well drinks	18	19 Kosmic Four smoking section w/dj devious spinning	20 Parkalmoon	21 Indonesian Mule
22	23	24 Two Dollar Tuesday \$2.00 draft beer \$2.00 Well drinks	25	26 FELT THE FEMMES DAVID TURBOW	27 THE MAGNETONES	28 THE D MAGGS UNIVERSAL FAMILY
29						

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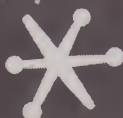
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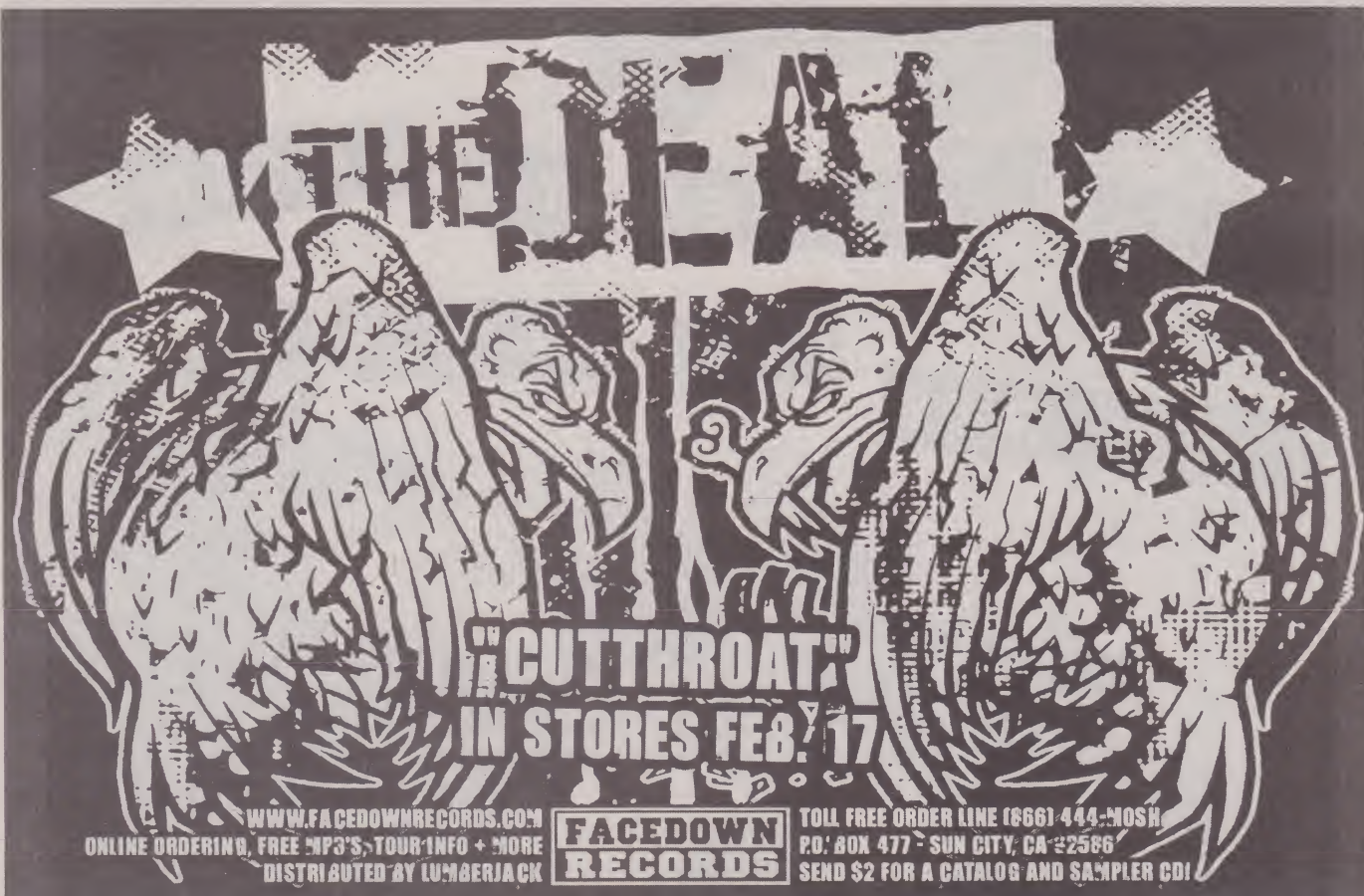


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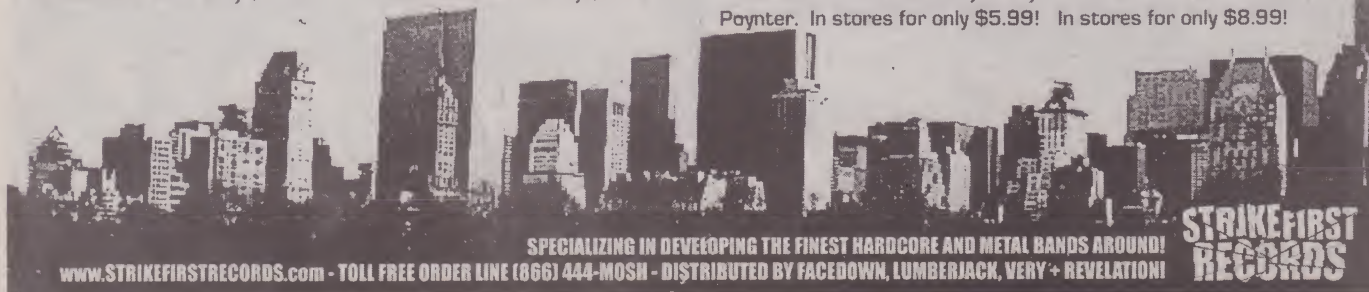
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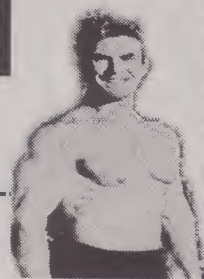
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Dear Skratch,

About a week ago I read your magazine (October 2003) for the first time and I just wanted to congratulate you on how well the magazine is constructed. I have not read any magazine that accommodated my musical needs. I enjoyed the article on the Aquabats, and I was pleasantly surprised. I laughed through the entire article, while my class was staring at me for making random noises out of no where; but it brought joy to me. Your ads weren't even horrible either! And that says a lot. I actually took notes to check out some bands and websites. Furthermore, it excited me to see that it was just not for residents of

issue. Against Me! is one of my favorite band. I would just like to thank you. Ok well i know im being a little repetitive so i'll stop.
P.S. THANK YOU HAHAAHAHA

Benjammin

Benjammin,

That's okay. If you're going to being repetitive and say something nice, why not? If you're going to being repetitive and say something-nice, why not?

Let me pose this little thought-o-rama (soon to be a store for morons like me) and you just sit back and relax Benj (pronounced Ben-gh) We all have our favorite bands and some of the bands I may like you think suck. Yet, if many share the same favorite band -in the same room while having a discussion about their favorite band, I think it should be coined a favored band. You know what I mean. Forgive me if I'm rambling. This is important. Are you following me son? My hands are coarse and crackly. It's the weather, dude (see why do I have to say dude when I write? Fuck!) and why do I have to cuss- to be cool and impress you, the misguided youth? I must share my fortunes of knowledge with all of you. Jumpstart a new generation. Become a pioneer. Oh, I could go for a 8 piece right now. I'm not kidding..Some good ole' fried chicken. A breast. A thigh. A wing. Uh, huh child. Yep. Am I getting through to ya?

By the way, everyday this guy that works at our office (I don't know his name, we're all robots here penting away our punk frustrations into our pale-white keyboards-pecking away) who's name is (I don't know his name, don't you listen?) 1456723 (not really, but helpful to this story) always is wearing an Against Me! T-shirt or sweatshirt. Yesterday, he was sporting Against Me! Socks. It haunts me in my dreams too. Against Me. Against Me. They are against me. They are out to get me. They are.

Pioneer chicken...hmmm...

Love,
Scott, Skratch

favorite quote from our crapbox:

" I'll get back to you after taking Ecstasy, Acid, some Heroine, a little dank, a bag of Pop Rocks (I mean who can resist?)."

AND ALL THESE FUCKING KIDS WANT IS TO HAVE A GOOD TIME BUT WE CANT CAUSE WE HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT GANGS AND EVEN PUNK CREWS WHO START SHIT AT SHOWS CAUSE SOMEONE WAS PUSHED IN THE PIT! I THOUGHT PUNKS WERE SAPOSED TO BE UNITED AND ALL THAT SHIT. YOU WALK DOWN A CERTAIN STREET IN LA PUENTE WITH LOGOS ON YOUR BACK AND YOUR CONSIDERED EITHER A POSER OR JUST ANOTHER LAME TRYING TO FIT IN. DAMN IM SICK OF THIS TYPE OF STEREOTYPICAL VIEWS. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO CHANGE SHIT IN THIS TOWN??

-ODDBALL

Dear Oddball,

You bring up some interesting issues here. Firstly, not everyone is in a gang or on drugs in La Puente. I think I need to take drugs to completely follow your letter. I'll get back to you after taking Ecstasy, Acid, some Heroine, a little dank, a bag of Pop Rocks (I mean who can resist?), some hasheesh, and some Ecstasy.

Until then, my answers would be: get some real friends, stay out of gangs, stay positive, talk to the right people (decision makers in your city) and see if you can make a change.

Be safe,
Scott, Skratch

California and that it pertained to my state as well, Arizona. So-excellent work, guys(gals). You just got a new fan.

-Christina

Christina,

Yes, There is more than Southern California bands covered in Skratch. We have writers and photographers from many different states and have the magazine distributed to tons of cities like yours. Goshdarnit, we even have a new section dedicated to punk rock in the United Kingdom.

The thing I must ask you is (being you're from Arizona) why are people there so nice and friendly? The kids in Cactusland appreciate local bands and those touring through your geographical hotspot unlike here in California. We are jaded, spoiled, and apparently have it too good. Seems like all the bands come here. There's a great show almost every night in a 30 mile radius. And the kids here take it for granted. So, in a way it's really you AZ folk, that got it good. Why? Because, you appreciate what comes around when it comes around. Am I boring you?

-Scott, Skratch

Dear Skratch,

I would love to congratulate on your magazine (especially this month). I would like to thank you for interviewing Against Me! on this month

**WE KNOW YOU
GOT SOMETHING
TO SAY.**

email us a letter. we'll try to be nice.
write it to: scott@skratchmagazine.com
do it. do it now.

JUST SAY JULIE



You Give Love a Bad Name by Julie Fredericksen

I'm trying to think of a good love song, and it's harder than I thought. I looked up lists of love songs on the Internet, and it's all the crap you'd imagine: Celine Dion's "My Heart Will Go On", Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You"...Those are fine if you're, say, hooked up to a respirator and that's what's being piped into the hospital room. But what about love songs for the rest of us? I'm glad to see the return of the lust song on the airwaves, with the Foo Fighters' cover of "Darling Nikki" and Jet's "Are You Gonna Be My Girl". Rock songs about feeling nasty just aren't getting the attention they should. Do I blame that sad-sack Aaron Lewis from Staind? Seemed that for a while his "I'm on the outside...I'm looking in" warblings were the standard on modern radio. That scary, hairy singer from System of a Down hasn't been singing about the ladies. Isolation, ostracization—those are common themes in music, but somebody out there has gotta be in love, right?

The fact that I can't think of a modern love song I like disturbs me. I have a feeling I do like some, but they're cloaked in sound and fury and just don't sound wuvey-duvey. As someone more drawn to angst and minor chords, my favorite songs aren't usually about love, but either the pain of attraction or the aftermath and wreckage of post-love. I like Sugar's (an old band that Bob Mould used to front) "Explode and Make Up" because the anguish in his voice seems so real, so bombed-out with weary rage, that it feels like he really had his heart crushed into little pulpy pieces. Now, THAT feels like a love song. My friend Tommy—who has excellent taste—cites Siouxsie and the Banshees' "Until the Last Beat of

My Heart" and a B-side Cure song, "Breathe", as songs that felt like love to him. My other friend Steve names No Doubt's "Underneath It All" as a love song, and David Bowie's "Heroes" is definitely a bona fide and moody love song. (I know: those two bands should never be used together in a sentence.) Modern English's "I Melt with You" shows up on some love-song lists, and first I rolled my eyes, then remembered that back then, yeah, it summed up my feelings for my boyfriend at the time, that crazy feeling that you could stop the world if you wanted to and get to some meltin'. I have a feeling the band Coldplay sings love songs, but that singer bugs me so much and so needs his ass kicked for being that wimpy that I just don't want to investigate.

A lot of love songs have girls' names for titles: The Allman Brothers' "Melissa", Elvis Costello's "Allison" ("Oh, it's so funny to be seeing you after so long, girl..."), The Rolling Stones' "Angie", Eric Clapton's "Layla"...Yeah, I realize these are all really old, but they're also really good, so shaddup). What's funny to me is the absence of songs with guys' names as their titles. I guess there would be something funny about a song called "Brad" or "Craig" or "Bob". It's just not done. But this is just to distract me from my point: where are the love songs?

Love seems so cheapened these days in the media. Reality shows where the guys compete to "win the girl of their dreams" and all those really offensive dating shows (which I watch once in a while to see how rude girls can be to each other when they compete over a guy. There's always a lot of anger towards the girl with the fake boobs. It's like watching Animal Planet). Britney and some guy got married for a little while because "they felt like doing something crazy." Dumb-as-a-box-of-hammers Jessica Simpson and her husband Nick Lachey (not as dumb—and looks really good shirtless) are pointlessly spending their first year of marriage



“ Maybe it's a big laff to them, a fun sort of idea, having a big action star known for his muscles, accent, and short catchphrases acting as California's governor. ”

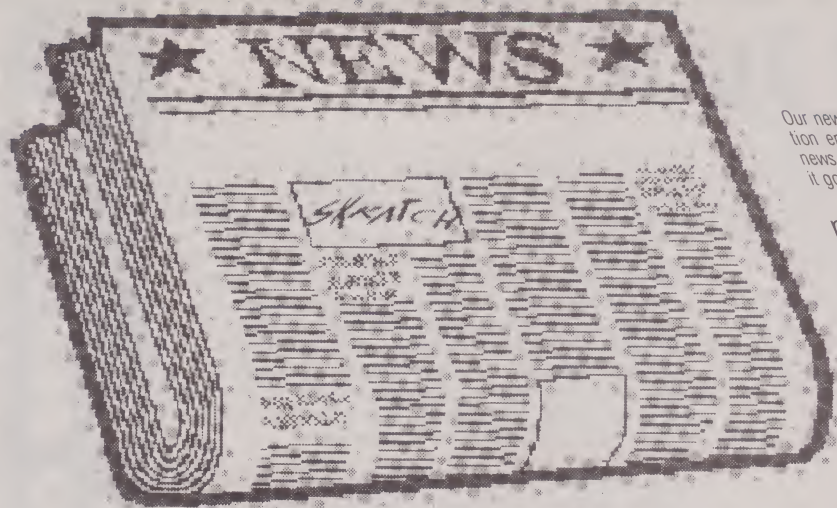
on MTV.

And even formally-cool Dave Navarro and his wife Carmen Electra have their own tedious show all about their wedding or something. So the concept of love is taking up space on TV just like a slow-speed car chase or an infomercial about rotisserie chicken.

But we know love isn't just that. Love—trying to find it, being in it, losing it—has made people pick up their guitars and drumsticks and microphones for decades. I guess the creative process is more about pain and loss than about being happy and in love and going to Home Depot together to pick out cabinets. But I know there are love songs you're all thinking about while you read this drivel, that you've turned to when you've been chewed up by love...or maybe, dare I say, giddy with happiness? Tell me about them at fulie_4j@yahoo.com.

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please submit
your news to:
Lizzy_skratchnews@hotmail.com

delivering the real news to you fast and friendly. fuckers!

IT'S A...BAND!

Nitro Records has proudly announced the newest member of this humble family. The excitement level is on the rise as a CD release from A Wilhelm Scream is already planned. "Mute Print" is anything but quite all though you may be speechless when you get your hands on this album in April of this year! This album is sure to set fire to the scene with its blazing progressive hardcore style! Also, the guys are hitting the road for an awesome tour this month and continuing into February. Go to <http://www.awilhelmscream.com> to you favorites though, so you can keep an eye on what these kick ass guys have in store!

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

The bands of the NEW YORK CITY ROCK N ROLL compilation are making some friends in high places. After rock'n' performances by Queen V, SLUNT, Sex Slaves, Joker Five Speed and Skum at the Slamdance Film Fest opening night bash on January 17 to over 1200 party people in Park City, UT, the NYC bands took off on tour across the West Coast. And as expected, word traveled far and fast amongst the famous faces of America. Drew Carey, Rachel Hunter, Lee Sobieski, Jamie Pressley, Gene Simmons of Kiss were just some rock'n' celebs to check em out! Feeling left out? Don't be! You still have a chance to catch this insane line up! Over 100 tour dates are planned for 2004, which means soon they'll be playing near you! Check newyorkcityrock.roll.com for the low down!

SKA IS DEAD? HARDLY!

We've all heard it a thousand times, "Ska is dead, no one listens to that anymore", and that may seem the case when people think your swearing at them when you say ska, and get even more offended if you ask them if they know how to skank! But this is far from true, and the "Ska is dead" tour is here to prove it! All

you rudies know what I'm talking about, but for everyone else, this is one tour not to miss this summer. With bands like Big D and the Kids Table, Mustard Plug, Catch 22, and the Planet Smashers, this is your dream come true. That gauntlet has been thrown, and this tour is here to kick the ska world in the ass and we've got our chucks laced up and ready to go! For more information on the tour of the year, check out www.skaisdead.com

I HEARD...

The rumor mills wheels were recently working over time as word of a line change up in Dimmu Borgir hit the streets. That band was short and to didn't try to beat around the bush as the sent out this simple statement regarding the rumors. "Nicholas has been removed from the line up of Dimmu Borgir. A session drummer will be used in the future. Don't waste your time speculating why, we have already moved on. See you on the road very soon!". They have also let us know that this will not keep them from promoting the hell out of their new album or hitting the road! Why not catch one of their shows, and show the new drummer a little love!

AND THE PRIZE GOES TO...

As if it's not hard enough to get noticed and gain a reputation in the music business, having two other bands with the same name as you only makes it that much harder! This was the problem San Diego natives "PrizeFight" were having. As a result, they have changed their name to "Comfortable for you". Their debut album will still remain titled "Prizefight" But will be repressed with their new name! Make sure to check them out under their new name on the "San Diego is Burning" compilation due out in April of 2004! (5)

TAKE IT LIKE A MAN...

Holland's favorite rock. Oil has

recently posted some new songs on www.oiltheband.com. These mp3's are a straight shot of rock with out a chaser, so take it like a man! Also, their latest EP "Electric Tongue" is now out on level-plane. And if your feeling the buzz from all this news, just imagine what you'll feel like this spring, as they are hitting up the US for a tour! You might want to stock up on the aspirin now!

FAIRY TALE OR TRUE?

Who ever told you unicorns weren't real, has obviously never been to Montreal, Canada. The Unicorns may be from Montreal, but they are migrating to the west coast to put on some rock'n' shows in support of their new album "Who Will Cut Our Hair When Were Gone?". With a sound not far from The White Stripes and The Rapture, these guys put on an awesome show, with killer music. You can never know exactly what to expect when it comes to their on stage antics, but you can bank on an awesome set! Check out www.the-unicorns.com for more details!

TECHNO + ROCK = KICK UP FIRE

What does techno, indietronica, rock, jazz and thrash with a sense of complete and utter reckless abandon have in common? Don't have a clue? Then check out The Cooper Temple Clause! This England-based sextet has a lot to offer hungry ears. Hitting stores in the U.S. February 24th is critically-acclaimed Kick Up The Fire, And Let The Flames Break Loose. If you're lucky enough to call the U.K. your home base maybe you can scrounge up some tickets from scalpers because their whole U.K tour is sold out thanks to their devote following in the U.K!

AND YOU THOUGHT MC HAMMER WAS OLD SCHOOL

Old School NYC Punk is being resurrected and slapped onto one CD! 22 bands from the Glam Punk, East Village, Downtown era

rip it up with sounds like the New York Dolls, Blondie and others from the Max's Kansas City and CBGB's early punk era. Get more info at www.radicalrecords.com

I DO.

Here come the brides all dressed in white. Brides Of Destruction is getting ready for their March 9th release "Here Comes The Brides." Filled with sneering, hook-filled gutter pop this album is sure to knock you off your feet right from the first beat. (10)

BROOKLYN BABY

I spy....Vex!! These guys are bringing back hardcore right from the heart of Brooklyn. Break out your hardcore dancing moves and mess up the pit some more at one of their insane shows. Be sure to check these hardcore rockers out if you're into bands like VOD, Dillinger Escape Plan, Life of Agony, Candiria, and System of a Down. Watch out for their upcoming release "Cast the First Stone" in March on Lakeshore Records.

BULLETS FLY!

"What More Do You Want?" is out today!!! The BULLET TREATMENT's new e.p. It's available on-line at Interpunk.com, Revhq.com, and Smartpunk.com, or you can get it at your local record store. This new e.p. is getting lots of hype from the media too! So catch it while its red-hot!

I HEART YOU

Some call them emo and some them indie but either way you'll "heart" Bright Eyes. You can catch them on tour this month at one of these east coast or Midwest venues! 2/19/04 Omaha, NE @ Witherspoon Concert Hall, 2/20/04 Minneapolis, MN @ Pantages Theatre, 2/21/04 Chicago, IL @ Vic Theater, 2/22/04 Pittsburgh, PA @ Club Laga, 2/23/04 Philadelphia, PA @ Trocadero, 2/24/04 Jersey City, NJ @ Loews Theatre, 2/26/04 Northampton, MA @ Pearl St,

2/28/04 Providence, RI @ Lupos at the Strand.

THAT FAMILY TREE IS GROWING...

Drive-Thru Records has just adopted two new California bands to their quickly growing family, Jenoh and Hello Goodbye. In February 2004 both bands will release a FREE digital EP through www.drive-thrurecords.com...WOOT!. If you can't wait for the free EP just go download fresh tracks from these bands on the new mp3.com, Purevolume.com! Also, try adding /jenoah to that address or <http://www.purevolume.com/hellogoodbye>

A RARE SIGHTING...

German Thrash-Death Metallers, Dew Scented, rippled the Metal scene after making a rare U.S. appearance this past November to compliment the release of their latest album Impact. Catch a look at a video clip posted online at www.evileyesight.com for an inside glimpse of what took place at this years New Jersey Metal Fest! You won't be disappointed.

IT'S NEW AND IMPROVED

Looking for something new and improved in your life? Well check out the new and EXTREMELY improved website from Good life Records! As you browse site's new very interactive and informative appearance you'll find loads of MP3s, a web radio, a message board, updated info on the bands, contests - WIN the new CONGRESS CD!, the Good life story and loads and loads more...Sounds like a party. So hit this party up at www.goodliferecordings.com

FOLLOW THE TRACKS

Deerhoof is leaving their mark in the snow this spring with their upcoming album, Milk Man due in stores March 9th, 2004! After the release they're off to promote it to the max! Catch them touring the UK, Europe, Scandinavia, Japan, and of course the US!

Some US dates are as follows. 2-23 - Eureka, CA - Sapphire Rose, 2-24 - Olympia, WA - Eagle Hall, -26 - Seattle, WA - Chop Suey, 2-27 - Portland, OR - Meow Meow, 3-4 - Los Angeles, CA - TBA, 3-5 - Santa Cruz, CA - Santa Cruz Teen Center, 3-7 - San Francisco, CA - Bottom Of The Hill, 4-16 - Austin, TX - TBA, 4-28 - Chicago, IL - TBA*, 5-2 - Salt Lake City, UT - TBA

I'M SORRY, COULD YOU REPEAT THAT?

Franz Ferdinand...who? Franz Ferdinand is all your favorite punk rock records from the late 70s, combined with the best of British indie rock from the early 80s and a pinch of party throwing art students! Rising without the help of phenom Franz Ferdinand is growing into a phenomenon here as well as their home the U.K. Watch out for this crazy British rock as they are poised to release their debut full length and self titled album!

STUCK IN THE MUD

Is spring not muddy enough for you? If not, check out the new release, Mud by Estzer Balint expected out in March of 2004! The very intelligent and artful work of Estzer is sure to please your spring cravings and ease your cram sessions for spring exams. It'll be out on Bar/None Records and you'll be sure to find this new release on their site, or maybe even your local record store.

CRAVINGS...

Swedish Fish! Well, ok not quite. The Swedish rockers Dimension Zero might not satisfy your sweet tooth, but they will satisfy your hunger for thrash aggression and sinister vocals. Their newest offering to the table is a ten-track album oozing with thrash metal filling. Watch out for this release later this year!

MY BEST FRIENDS ARE....

"My best friends are Metalheads!" Does this cry sound familiar to you? Well it might if your friends are listening to Metal for the Masses II. It's exclusively located at Hot Topic stores around the nation and includes tons groundbreaking and up coming artists such as Arch Enemy, Diabolic, Dimmu Borgir, Eyes of Fire, Glass Casket, Haste, Shadows Fall and Watch Them Die, among others. Be sure to add over 77 minutes of head banging madness to you and your friends road trip collection.

PART OF A HEALTHY MUSIC DIET....

A staple of the Boston music scene's diet has just been added to SideOneDummy Records. Welcome Piebald! This quartet has been ripping up the music scene since the early 90's and has shared the stage with bands like Dashboard Confessional, The Get Up Kids, New Found Glory, Jimmy Eat World, Taking Back Sunday and Thursday. Look for a new CD out in the summer on 2004 with a tour to follow!

FOR THE LOVE OF...

Touring solo this month is Asian Man Records own Mike Park. He'll be making his way up and down California and a few random dates across the U.S. If you haven't checked out his solo album "for the love of music" I HIGHLY suggest you do so. Even better you can check him out live at one of these shows and pick up the CD! 03.05.04 - CA, Berkeley @ 924 Gilman, all ages, 8pm (plays first, get there early!), 03.06.04 - CA, San Francisco @ Bottom of the Hill, all ages, 8pm (plays first, get there early!), 03.11.04 - CA, Anaheim @ Chain Reaction, all ages, doors at 7:30 (plays @ 8pm, 03.12.04 - CA, Los Angeles @ Troubadour, all ages, doors at 7:30 (plays @ 8pm), 03.14.04 - IN, Indianapolis @ Rehearsal Studios, 3510 S. Keystone Ave, w/ The Lawrence Arms, \$8, 7pm, 03.15.04 - MO, St. Louis @ Hi-Pointe, 1001 McCausland, w/ The Lawrence Arms, all ages, \$8, 8:30pm

FANCY A SHAG?

They're coming to "Shag" the States, as Cooper Temple Clause's bassist states. Hitting off their U.S. tour in Washington D.C. March

5th and wrapping it up in Austin, TX March 28! Catch one of these shows before they slip through your fingers! Fri 3/5 Washington, DC 9:30 Club, Sat 3/6 Philadelphia, PA The Khyber, Sun 3/7 Hoboken, NJ Maxwell's, Tue 3/9 New York, NY Bowery Ballroom, Wed 3/10 Boston, MA Paradise, Mon 3/15 Chicago, IL Double Door, Thurs 3/18 Austin, TX Fox & Hound (BPI Showcase @ SXSW), Fri 3/19 Dallas, TX Gypsy Tea Room, Sun 3/21 Denver, CO Larimer Lounge, Wed 3/24 Los Angeles, CA Troubadour, Thurs 3/25 San Francisco, CA The Independent, Sun 3/28 Seattle, WA Crocodile Café.

THAT HAD TO HURT..

Crunch! Due to some nasty black ice Regarding was forced to go on hiatus and cancell part of their tour. Total bummer! The band only suffered a few minor cuts and bruises, but the van didn't turn out as lucky. It's being hospitalized and nursed back to health. Watch out for make up releases as soon as their beloved member returns to the roads.

STOP, DROP, AND ROLL.

Pennywise is going to be burning up the East Coast and the Midwest leaving nothing but ashes. From The Ashes, Pennywise's newest release, has been called the pinnacle of Pennywise's 15 year career! Catch them play their new songs and beyond on tour this spring with Guttermouth, Bleed The Dream and Stretch Armstrong! 2/18 Washington, DC 930 Club, 2/19 Philadelphia, PA The Trocadero, 2/22 Cleveland, OH Agora Theatre, 2/26 Pontiac, MI Clutch Cargo's, 2/27 Chicago, IL House of Blues, 2/28 Milwaukee, WI The Rave, 2/29 Minneapolis, MN The Quest.

WELL I HEARD...

Norma Jean would like to clear up the Middle School gossip and clarify that Brad Norris will no longer be singing with the band. There are no hard feelings between the band and Brad. Hooray! The band is still planning on making it to their U.K. tour this month so look out! Cory Putman is the lifesaver who will be filling in as their vocalist for those shows. A full U.S. tour in March/April is also still on the band's agenda!

HITTIN' THE ROAD

Portuguese goth-metal pioneers Moonspell will embark on a national tour alongside Opeth and DevilDriver running through February 28th! Moonspell's tour is in support of their critically acclaimed new album, The Antidote, heralded as their best offering since the landmark Wolfheart and Irreligious albums.

LIFE IN THE LUXURY LANE..

Living lifestyles of the rich and famous are Benji and Joel Madden, Good Charlotte, launching their new record company, D.C. FLAG RECORDS. The very first thing on their agenda, releasing Lola Ray's "I Don't Know You" out April 6th, 2004. Described by Benji "as New York garage rock, but more on the rock side, not as dirty" you sure won't want to miss this album! (30)

EVERY OTHER SHOW?

Yet another band is showing off their hard time spent in the studio over winter! The Everyothers are embarking themselves on a U.S. tour for the next few months. Post tour will be the release of their latest self titles work expected to come out March, 29th! If ants are taking over your pants be sure not to miss one of these shows to catch a glimpse of the upcoming rock of The Everyothers: Feb. 18 Echo Lounge Atlanta, GA, Fri, Feb. 20 Walters Houston, TX., Wed, Feb. 25 Plush Tucson, AZ., Fri, Feb. 27 TBD Oakland, Ca., Sat., Feb. 28 TBD San Francisco, Tue., March 2 and more!

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What's Love Got To Do With It?

Ron Sievers/Orange Recordings/President

3 bands I would make love to: Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, The Cult, Oasis

I fell in love with: Cocaine

Making love is: Buying your girlfriend a Prada purse to go with her Range Rover

These people I love to hate: Bono, Michael Jackson, Jack White, George Bush, Jr.

I show my love by: Showering you with gifts

Tiffany Chow/Skratch Magazine/Press Coordinator

3 bands I would make love to: hypothetically The Faint, Relient K (Matt the singer), Gloria (Geoff the guitarist)

I fell in love with: Jesus

Making love is: for marriage :)

These people I love to hate: make love not hate!

I show my love by: showering affection, trying to be understanding, being concerned

Beth Van Boxtel/91X XTRA-FM/intern

3 bands I would make love to: The Shins, South, The Spill Canvas

I fell in love with: Europeans that make music...actually I just love attractive European boys.

Making love is: "...to you was never second best"

These people I love to hate: People that take orders at fast food drive-thru windows. Yet I still return to the same establishment and experience the same problems repeatedly.

I show my love by: Dancing with you in the rain, listening to Jump Little Children.

JP/Drive-Thru Records/Director of New Media/Marketing

3 bands I would make love to: The Donnas, Jane's Addiction, Lillix

I fell in love with: music

Making love is: fun and free

These people I love to hate: nazis and people who are beautiful, talented, and rich.

I show my love by: snogging

Jessica Rihal/Skratch/Comp girl etc..

3 bands I would make love to: Thrice (naturally), Saosin and Jack from The White Stripes mmm.

I fell in love with: Lip balm.

Making love is: lots of things.

These people I love to hate: random flying hxc dancers who come out of no where and knock you on your ass at shows.

I show my love by: Kicking you when your down, and then tickling you until you can't breathe/ Passing on good music.

David Jensen/Sunset Alliance/Owner

3 bands I would make love to: Cursive/Drive Like Jehu/Pearl Jam

I fell in love with: Annelise Hopkins

Making love is: Private

These people I love to hate: Ticker Tape Parade, Hillary Clinton

I show my love by: Leaving parties early

Norberto Gomez, Jr./Skratch/Writer

3 bands I would make love to: radiohead, beck, sigur ros

I fell in love with: my girlfriend, Philosophy class

Making love is: something that shouldn't be taken for granted

These people I love to hate: i don't love to hate, but that's a nice oxymoron

I show my love by: expressing the inspiration they've given me

Kiki Yablon/The Dishes/Guitarist

3 bands I would make love to: the Red Eyed Legends (except that would be gross because I'm the keyboard player), Scene Creamers, and Led Zeppelin circa '70.

I fell in love with: Doug McCombs

Making love is: more fun when you're not legally married

These people I love to hate: Why you gotta hate?

I show my love by: hey, uh, I made you a mix tape . . .

Everyone admits that love is wonderful and necessary, yet no one agrees on just what it is.

~Diane Ackerman, author/writer~

Shannon Haslinger/ Skratch/ Photographer& Writer

3 bands I would make love to: the aka's, the bled, and saosin

I fell in love with: the boys in tight pants with lip rings that dance around and hit eachother

Making love is: like riding a bike. once you learn you will never forget

These people I love to hate: are the ones that think there tough shit.

I show my love by: dancing around with a pistol in my hand.

Eric Lawson/Skratch/Photographer

3 bands I would make love to: piebald, the format, limbeck

I fell in love with: Chelsea Hepner

Making love is: entirely different from having sex.

These people I love to hate: my fucking history teacher.

I show my love by: making a scene.

Jeremy Jansen/Stitch Photography/Photographer

3 bands I would make love to: HELMET, JAWBREAKER, RYE COALITION

I fell in love with: the idea I might actually receive a job from skratch magazine.... while listening to EVERYTIMEIDIE!

Making love is: JS HER WAY OF POURING SALT IN THE WOUND.

These people I love to hate: THE CREATORS OF friendster.com, myspace.com and anyone who truly believes that 'emo' is an actual musical catagory ...

I show my love by: wishing you all to stand completely breathless and still.

Joe Wilson/Skratch/Interviewer-CD Reviewer

3 bands I would make love to: Mock Orange, Coheed and Cambria, Strike Anywhere

I fell in love with: Nick and Jessica on The Newlyweds.

Making love is: Great to do with someone other than yourself.

These people I love to hate: The entire Jackson family.

I show my love by: Not killing ya'll.'

Doubt of the reality of love ends by making us doubt everything.

~Henri-Frédéric Amiel (1821-81) philosopher/poet~

Andrew J. Brawley/Kung Fu Records/Promotions Coordinator

3 bands I would make love to: The Bronx / Avenged Sevenfold / Halo Friendlies (to bring me back to hetero-land)

I fell in love with: A girl

Making love is: What the girl is doing while the guy is fucking her

These people I love to hate: most pop-punk bands, but not all of them

I show my love by: buying a CD without bumming one from another label

J. Bannon/Converge

3 bands I would make love to: Led Zeppelin, Depeche Mode, Swans.

I fell in love with: Music.

Making love is: Poetic.

These people I love to hate: Fairweather everythings.

I show my love by: Living it every day.

Making love is: gross

These people I love to hate: I love everybody!

I show my love by: using the toilet, no no, buying lunch

Howard Wuelfing/Howlin' Wuelf Media, Inc./owner

3 bands I would make love to: (before I met my present wife) Fanny, Miranda Sex Garden, Strawberry Switchblade

I fell in love with: Tru Fax & The Insaniacs, The Bangles, Carly Simon

Making love is: an extension of inner spiritual/psychological ecstasy expressed through use of fleshly organs designed for reproductive functions

These people I love to hate: Adolph Hitler, George Bush, Jr., Pol Pot

I show my love by: extending inner ecstasy via fleshly organs designed for reproductive functioning

Matt Fisher/Skratch Magazine/Slave

3 bands I would make love to: Against Me!, Against Me!, Johnny Cash

I fell in love with: all the beautiful ladies at Skratch Magazine

Skratch Love Survey '04

Jasten King/your 2004 V-day Dreamdate

3 bands I would make love to: Lunachicks (Theo), Distillers (Brody), Nysnc (Justin)

I fell in love with: KillRadio from Los Angeles

Making love is: ...so last year, it's all about bad sex with strangers

These people I love to hate: (i ain't gonna be playa hatin', foo)

I show my love by: keeping an open door policy on my zipper at all times

Ross Siegel/Law of Inertia Productions/The Prez

3 bands I would make love to: Christina Aguilera, Samantha Fox, Jewel

I fell in love with: Lemmy from Motorhead or Hilary Swank in Boys Don't Cry.

Making love is: So hot. Especially when there's bananas and whipped cream involved.

These people I love to hate: EJ from Prosthetic records, Aaron from Law of Inertia, Justin from Wonka Vision, Charlie from BYO, Scott from Skratch.

I show my love by: using bananas and whipped cream.

Annette Magazine
Ovanessian/Skratch
writer/photographer,
www.undergroundup.com

3 bands I would make love to: RANCID for some hard-lovin and Portishead for some freaky lovin and some Sade for MAKING LOVE.

I fell in love with: One day, maybe I can answer this question....

Making love is: lots of FUN and pleasure if you have the RIGHT person to make love to.

These people I love to hate: A selfish 2 minute man, and Radio stations for not playing a variety of music.

I show my love by: Just being a good and honest person shows my love deeply, but, I'm still single and waiting for my good and honest man.

Amanda MacKinnon/Tooth & Nail and Solid State Records/Publicist

3 bands I would make love to: Every Time I Die (Keith Buckley is dreamy!) Wilco (anyone making music that beautiful deserves some lovin'!) Boyz II Men (Because they already told me they'd make love to me)

I fell in love with: Jason Schwartzman playing "Max Fisher" in Rushmore.

Max, if you were only real, I would be your Margaret Yang!

Making love is... "the key, A burning flame that will last eternally" Yep, I'm pretty sure that's the first time I've ever quoted LL Cool J

These people I love to hate: John Mayer, Dave Matthews, and anyone who likes their music.

I show my love by: buying albums from Tooth & Nail and Solid State Records...and you should too! :)

Heather Jagger/Skratch Magazine/Photographer

3 bands I would make love to: Death Cab for Cutie, Apollo Sunshine, Same Way Again

I fell in love with: fashion mullets.. what can i say.. simply amazing

Making love is: not something i really know about.. haha

These people I love to hate: 12 year old fem-bros that go to shows and try to look cool by throwing their hot topic bracelet covered arms in the air.... aah the scenesters.

I show my love by: buying stupid presents that remind me of them... or making things like ceramic penguins for them...

True love is eternal, infinite, and always like itself. It is equal and pure, without violent demonstrations: it is seen with white hairs and is always young in the heart.

~Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850)writer~

Jeremy/New School Records!/Owner

3 bands I would make love to: No Use For A Name, Nuclear Saturday & Snoop dogg

I fell in love with: The idea of being single.

Making love is: Something special! Having sex, is just getting laid!

These people I love to hate: The Olsen twins

I show my love by: Releasing my bands records

Casey Murphy/Universal Music/College Marketing Rep

3 bands I would make love to:

1. Sade 2. Elliott Smith 3. Michael Bolton

I fell in love with: Music when I was fifteen, but most importantly, my LOVA right before I almost lost entire faith in life.

Making love is: AWESOME if you have someone great to share it with.

These people I love to hate: A certain ex-roommate who does not know the value of FRIENDSHIP; Britney Spears, and naysayers.

I show my love by: Displaying gratitude to those I love! I know it sounds cliché, but my biggest fear is leaving this earth without my loves knowing how much I truly appreciate them in my life.

The image of myself which I try to create in my own mind in order that I may love myself is very different from the image which I try to create in the minds of others in order that they may love me.

~Wystan Hugh Auden (1907-73)writer/critic~

Brian Spiegel/Skratch Magazine/Wanna Be Writer

3 bands I would make love to: Michelle Branch, Jewel (even after that whole pop thing) and Rainer Maria.

I fell in love with: whoever television tells me to fall in love with.

Making love is: "Rotate 3 degree's, rotate another 8 degrees and your done"- Bender, Futurama.

These people I love to hate: George W. Bush (who would I complain about without him?)

I show my love by: being quite and writing emo songs.

Melissa Wong/Skratch Magazine/Writer

3 bands I would make love to: Green Day, 311 and anything reggae.

I fell in love with: skinny white boys who have great style

Making love is: MANDATORY for survival!

These people I love to hate: Linkin Park = barf.

I show my love by: dancing around the streets naked and singing "I think I love you, but what am I so afraid of?"

Country Neal/Aggravated Music/President

3 bands I would make love to: One Band, Three Words: The Fabulous Tuscaderos, hahahahahaha!

I fell in love with: Scott Skratch, but all he wants to do is work out.

Making love is: expensive... loan me a \$50, I'm feeling lucky!

These people I love to hate: Bush, Everyone in front of me while driving, Cellphone abusers, the Offspring, Mall Cops, People who own little dogs and bring them everywhere.

I show my love by: Not hitting you over the head with a shovel, dragging your unconscious body into a Taco Bell and demanding they make you into chalupa meat

Ryan Seeley/Zito's Pizza/Salad tosser

3 bands I would make love to: Against Me!, Operation Ivy, Simon&Garfunkel

I fell in love with: a badger

Making love is: a daily practice

These people I love to hate: Matt Fisher, Ray Yabuki, Francis Bourdage

I show my love by: taking off my pants

Rachel Bolan/Skid Row/ Bassist-Songwriter

3 bands I would make love to: Iggy and the Stooges - Raw Power, Fear - More Beer,

Johnny Cash - At Folsom Prison

I fell in love with: Rock and Roll. I was young, I didn't know what I was getting myself into.

Making love is: a really wimpy way of saying "Fucking." If I was with a girl and she asked me to "make love to her", she'd get dumped.

These people I love to hate: People that refer to sex or fucking as "making love." The term literally turns my stomach. Honest.

I show my love by: I don't



The love Classifieds

BRITNEY SPEARS IF SHE WAS PUNK
My fave color is pink. I'm young, sweet, Bands i love: Coheed, Get up kids, and tiger army. Do you wanna be my lover? Hot punks email me:
innocentgurlmywah@yahoo.com

MAKE A DATE WITH SATAN
tall, middle-aged latin punk God with LONG sideburns seeking a f'n hot sizzling latina who loves a nice rubdown in a hellbound hot tub. Come get yer salvation.
email: punkshite@hotmail.com

JUSTICE HAS BEEN SERVED
18, busty, bouncy, playful love kitten purrfect for a hot dog like you. More curves than a Corvette + better ride than a Lexus. seeking male or female with class or just plain good ass. email:
makemesmile12@hotmail.com

I SLAMMED MY CAR
yeah, it's fed up. Cheer me up. I could use it. I am a single, muscular guy with lotsa tattoos. ask me what bands I like. they're better than yours. Suck me off at:
punkjockjerk@yahoo.com

I SCREAM FOR YOU
20 year-old straightedge-in-my-own-way, One of the best vocalist's and always down 4 the old NYHC. Need a girl not to skinny, not too big who will like me for me. FYI: That's right, I played in a few bands u may know, bitch. Talk to me:
imNaHXCband@yahoo.com

METAL MANIA
More metal then your high schools auto shop. I have jet black hair and a jet black stare. Tough guys need lovin' too. I'm into girls who give back rubs with sexy black painted nails, We can slay each other while listening to slayer! Metalsalutations@hotmail.com

LIBERTY SPIKES
sexy, punk rock gurl with green, yello, and blu spikes from chicago needs u. luv all the punkcore shit. i collect vinyl, old flyers, and pussies like u. what i want: well-balanced guy with passhin. Looking for friend or boyfriend.
Anarchychiq16@hotmail.com

SO EMO IT HURTS
no trendy chicks allowed! Into artsy girls who are not afraid to wear converse and a hooded sweater when we go out. I'm compared to Chris Carraba. Contact me + we can go to a museum. XindiemusikX@yahoo.com

SKAS NOT DEAD!
looking for a rude boy to skank the night away with. I luv going to shows and Disneyland. Favs include the specials, the toast-ers, and the aquabats. So check-er me out! 1StepBeyond01@hotmail.com

I LOVE DAVEY
Doesn't mean I can't love another. Seeking real punk rocker who's sensitive. Feminine guys are a plus. Dark hair's a must. email:
AFI4everdewd@yahoo.com

SK8 OR DIE
If u r a chick who knows that zero is not just a number then I luv u. a chick who'll come to my demos + cheer when I bust a killer darkslide. Chicks w/those pink Etnies don't count, posers!
Grecoshreds@hotmail.com

FASHIONXCORE
I want girls who dig boys like their girls. If you are a girl who wants boy that can look at pretty as you then I am your man. Fashion is a must. Ps. Even better if we can share make up.
LuvMetroDan@yahoo.com

LOOKING FOR TROUBLE
Naughty girl seeking bad boy. No sissies, no mamma's boys, no exceptions. Take me away on your Harley and I will be forever yours. Guy needs to be over 21 cuz the local bar is my second home, it will be you, me and Jack D! DangerKittN@yahoo.com

FLAMING DICE ARE NICE
Rock-a-Billy Betty seeks Mike Ness look-alike. Tattooed bad boys w/pitchblack pompadours + creepers are my weakness. If you're in a band or greaser gang, let me wear your leather jacket + I'll give you my heart. Mail me maybe we can go to the hootenanny together! MorriCgurlly@hotmail.com

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Chaos USA Tour

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TOTAL CHAOS
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RESILIENCE

Wed 3/10 - San Diego, CA. - unconfirmed
Thurs 3/11 - Phoenix, AZ. - Mason Jar
Fri 3/12 - Corona, CA. - Showcase Theatre
Sat 3/13 - LA, CA. - Allen Theatre
Sun 3/14 - San Francisco, CA. - The Pound
Mon 3/15 - Portland, OR. - Paris Theatre
Tues 3/16 - Seattle, WA. - Grace-Land
Wed. 3/17 - Bend, OR. - Midtown
Thurs. 3/18 - Boise, ID - JD and Friends
Fri 3/19 - Salt Lake City, UT. - Albe Square
Sat 3/20 - Denver, CO. - Climax Lounge
Sun 3/21 - Albuquerque, NM. - The Attic
Mon 3/22 - Dallas, TX. - Galaxy
Tues 3/23 - Houston, TX. - Fitzgeralds
Wed 3/24 - San Antonio, TX. - Sin 13
Thurs 3/25 - Mobile, AL
Fri 3/26 - Saint Petersburg, FL. - Masquerade
Sat 3/27 - Orlando, FL. - Wills Pub
Sun 3/28 - Atlanta, GA. - Masquerade

*Tues 3/30 - Wilmington, NC. - Marrz
*Wed 3/31 - Philly, PA

*TOTAL CHAOS & RESILIENCE ONLY

Chaos USA Tour



FUNERAL DRESS

"A WAY OF LIFE"
SOSR3001



FUNERAL DRESS

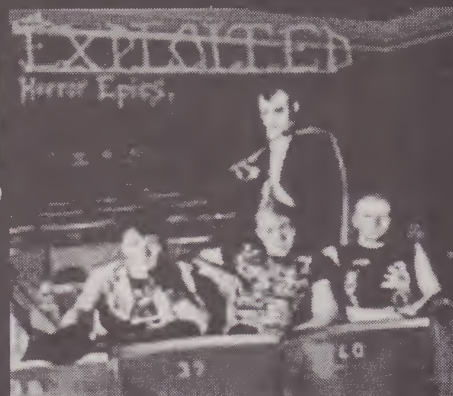


A WAY OF LIFE

TOTAL CHAOS
"PUNK INVASION"
SOSR3002



"HORROR EPICS"
SOSR4001
RELEASE DATE 2/24/04



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ONLY

THE

LOVELY



Stephanie Holland/Skratch/ad girl

What do you look for in a mate?: Passion, compassion, honesty, outgoingness, drive, ambition, sweetness, feistiness. Style, intelligence, good looks, witty humor (yom bom booty) and potty humor are a must.

If you could choose your ideal mate who would you pick?:

Can't say...he might read this, and Drake McElroy.

What do you like most about being single?: Not having someone tell me what I can and can not do. Yet I don't like being single.

So why are you still single?: Hey do you want to ask me out?...I guess I haven't found the right guy...wait...I did, but....!

Turn ons?: BLACK HAIR...with pale skin, light eyes with black eyeliner. High intelligence and humor get me going...YOUR MOM!

Turn offs?: Bad teeth, low intelligence, bitterness, briefs



Vanessa/Fat Wreck Chords/Publicist

What do you look for in a mate?: Someone who's not allergic to cats or mushrooms.

If you could choose your ideal mate who would you pick?:

Someone who is loyal, artistic, and funny.

What do you like most about being single?: Freedom

So why are you still single?: Haven't met the love of my life yet.

Turn ons?: Loyalty, confidence, generosity.

Turn offs?: Snitches and cheapness.



Ana Calderon/Hopeless & Sub City Records/Publicity & Promotions

What do you look for in a mate?: Hair in all the right places...

If you could choose your ideal mate who would you pick?:

Benicio del Toro

What do you like most about being single?: F-R-E-E-D-O-M!

So why are you still single?: So that I can be available for Benicio.

Turn ons?: Nice record collections, humor peppered with witty nuances, pirates

Turn offs?: Phlegm, flatulence, halitosis...



Matt Fisher/Skratch Mag/Comp. guy/pro hxc dancer

What do you look for in a mate?: A female

If you could choose your ideal mate who would you pick?:

Avril Lavigne

What do you like most about being single?: I can spend all of my time choreographing my hxc dancing.

So why are you still single?: Because my mom won't let me date yet.

Turn ons?: Emo

Turn offs?: Light switches.

ONLY THE LONELY



Michelle your Belle/Skratch Mag./Press

What do you look for in a mate?: Looks, humor, charm, smarts, hopeless romantic like me, Sass, STYLE, age (20-28)...

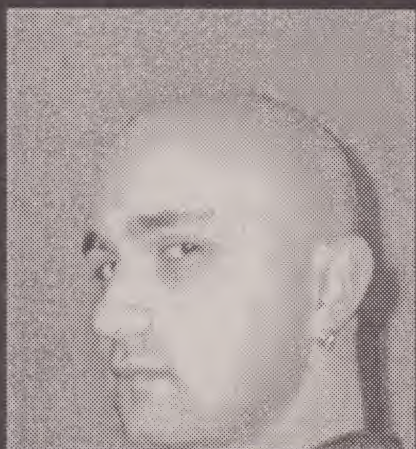
If you could choose your ideal mate who would you pick?: The pres. of the doom patrol(happy V-day love). Ryan Dunn, Drake McElroy.

What do you like most about being single?: It has been noted in the book of world records that I am biggest flirt so being allowed to talk & heart who ever I want is money.

So why are you still single?: Hot Damn I'm simply too hot to be with one person. Also between Skratch, school, and being the president of the world ...if I have time it goes to my friends.

Turn ons?: Tatts, pretty hair, snake bites, men with tight Diesel jeans who can dance...

Turn offs?: Tribal tatts around the arm, egos, liars, ugliness...



Justin D'Angelo/Blackout Records/Promotions Dude

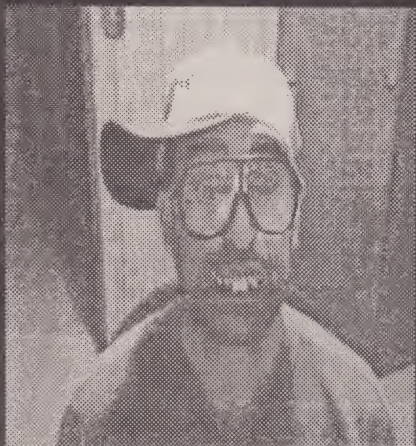
What do you look for in a mate?: Tolerance, as in, I can tolerate her and she can tolerate me!

If you could choose your ideal mate who would you pick?: ...how about looks like Kylie Minogue, brains like an MIT physicist, eloquence, and listens to metal?

What do you like most about being single?: When I make an ass out of myself (which is often), I'm the only one who needs to be embarrassed (though I rarely am). Plus, there's the heavy drinking...

So why are you still single?: I'd have to say it's probably the making an ass out of myself! Or, could be the heavy drinking...

Turn ons?: Etoquence and intelligence. Legs are nice as well, though. Turn offs?: Idiocy.



Timmy Hansell/Vagrant New Media

If you could choose your ideal mate who would you pick?: Brody Dalle (of The Distillers)

What do you like most about being single?: You're allowed to make out with anyone you want.

So why are you still single?: Because I have tonsillitis all the time and no one wants to kiss me.

turn ons?: Down To Earth Approach

turn offs?: Piebald



Greggory Moore/Skratch Magazine/copy editor

What do you look for in a mate?: Genuineness, intellectual curiosity, liberality, humor, fitness, likes me

If you could choose your ideal mate, who would you pick?: Allison who works at Trader Joe's in Brea (I don't actually know her at all, but she sure SEEMS swell)

What do you like most about being single?: Nothing comes to mind

So why are you still single?: a) I rarely meet people; b) perhaps I'm completely unloveable?

Turn-ons?: See what I look for in a mate

Turn-offs?: Bigotry, acquisitiveness, ignorance (esp. while being ignorant of it), fat

JUST

THE

TWO

OF

US



Chad Pearson/The Militia Group/CMFIC

How did you meet your significant other?: I met Candy at a show

How long have you been together?: 1 1/2 years

What attracted you to your mate?: She's hot and she has a great personality plus she don't mind too much that I fart and burp A LOT.

What is your favorite thing about your mate?: Candy's Laugh is the best thing I have ever heard. I love you babe.



Jason Sidote/Relapse Records/Distro.wholesale

How did you meet your significant other?:

After being slick dancing with her at a nightclub called "Evolution" in Philly.

How long have you been together?: 4+ long gut-wrenching beautiful years and getting married June 12th, 2004!

What attracted you to your mate?: Her style, attitude and aggressiveness

What is your favorite thing about your mate?: Open-mindedness, intelligence, thoughtfulness caring and brutality.

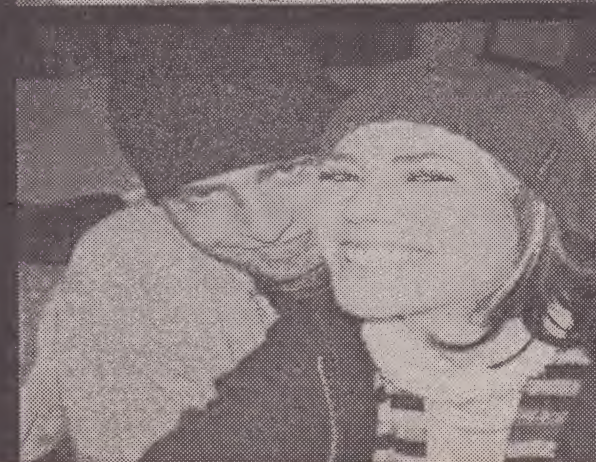


Heather Smith/Century Media/Publicist

How did you meet your significant other?: We met at The Showcase Theater three years ago. While talking I got knocked over and Istvan caught me in his arms. I literally fell for him then and there.

How long have you been together?: Over a year
What attracted you to your mate?: His overwhelming presence. I felt like I was in the presence of an Eastern European King. He was gracious, kind, dark and mysterious.

What is your favorite thing about your mate?: Istvan is true to his word and will go out of his way to help his friends any way he can, and he remains my dark and mysterious lover.



Bryan Sandell/AZPunk.com/Admin

How did you meet your significant other?: I first saw her when my ex was doing a photo shoot over a year ago and she was one of the models.. Around Halloween I had a small party (I was then single) she came over..I started to dig on her and had to ask her out!

How long have you been together?: 10wks now...

What attracted you to your mate?:...A buddy of mine told her I just wanted to plug her hole...At first glance and not talking to her...that maybe was the case. But after being with her...I fell in love, she being so kind, so smart, and everything I ever wanted.

What is your favorite thing about your mate?: Her smile...is so big...So no matter what mood I'm in...it makes me feel all warm inside..

JUST

THE

TWO

OF

US



Jessica Rihal/Skratch/Skratch Regulator

How did you meet your significant other?: At a Simple Plan show duh.
How long have you been together?: 5 months

What attracted you to your mate?: His happy contagious smile
What is your favorite thing about your mate?: His style and how he secretly loves Coheed & Cambria despite all the smack he talks on emo, but really he's super nice and just an all around understanding great guy.



Bryan Sheffield/Doghouse Records/Label Manager

How did you meet your significant other?: We met at The Museum School in Boston...
How long have you been together?: 2 years, 9 months, 14 days

What attracted you to your mate?: She is a beautiful, kind hearted and creative individual. Not only does she put up with me always working, constantly travelling, and never home, but she is very supportive too. Oh, she is also a damn fine cook!

What is your favorite thing about your mate?: Allison has very sane views on things that I have a hard time rationalizing. She is always there for me to bounce ideas off... she completes me.



Ryan Immegart/Volcom Entertainment/VP of A&R

How did you meet your significant other?: High School

How long have you been together?: 7 years

What attracted you to your mate?: Sex
What is your favorite thing about your mate?: Having sex and taking care of the daily chores...



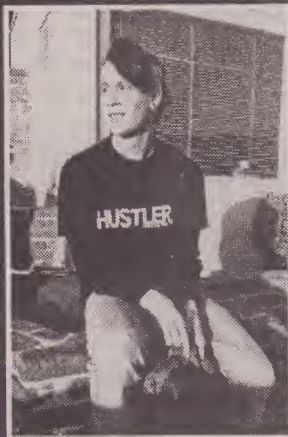
Tiffany Chow/Skratch Magazine/Press Coordinator

How did you meet your significant other?: At a mutual friend's birthday party
How long have you been together?: Around 4 months

What attracted you to your mate?: a. ridiculously good looking, b. beautiful big eyes, c. amazingly sweet and kind, d. silly and fun to be around

What is your favorite thing about your mate?: There's so many! his artistic abilities, how he's exactly what i need, how much fun i have with him, how patient he is with me, how hot he looks when he plays shows!

PEOPLE ON THE STREETS...

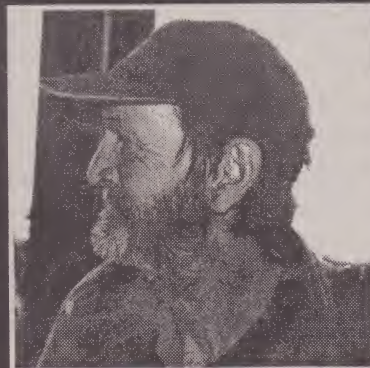
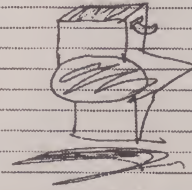


Name Dallas Runbar (skunk-D)

Age 18

Your thoughts on love:

~~I saw love in a toilet once.~~

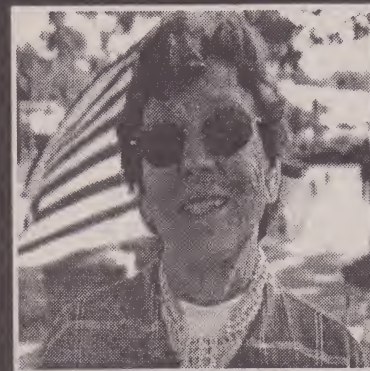


NAME: Lowell Hall

Age: 55

YOUR THOUGHTS ON LOVE:

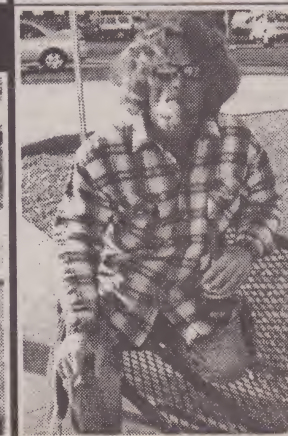
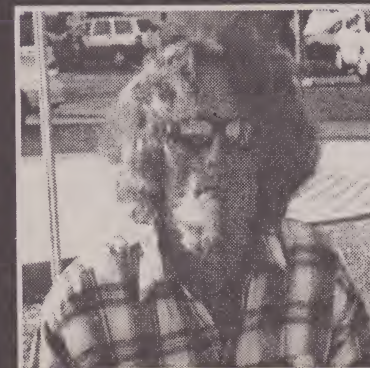
Free MOM
Gail J. Lee



Name: E. Enger

Age: 80

Your thoughts on love: Greatest
force on earth!



Name: Ray Balfour

Age: 32

Your thoughts on love:

Most people mistake sex for love.
Love is earned.



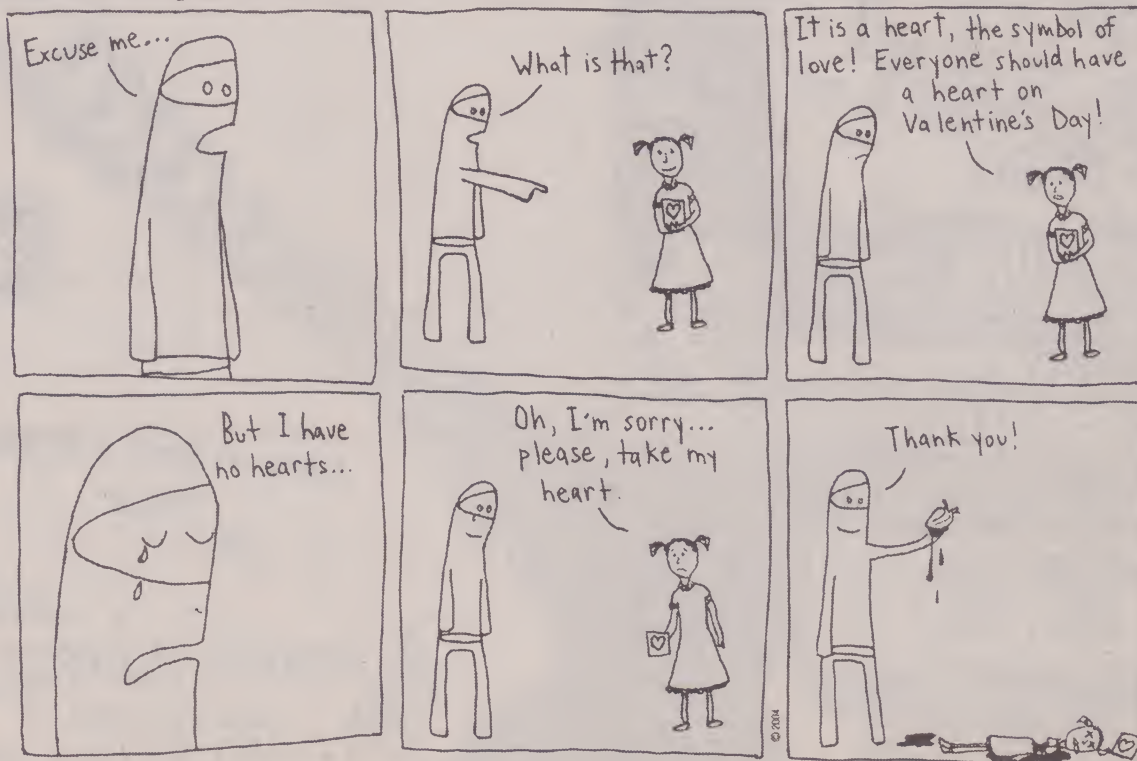
i love the way your
breath smells just like
ball sweat.

by Natalie Dee www.nataliedee.com

20 Things I WILL NOT TELL MY GIRLFRIEND ON VALENTINE'S DAY:

1. I like you a lot.
2. You look bloated.
3. Wanna F'?
4. Your friend's got a nice ass.
5. Are you on the rag again?
6. I would've given you a dozen, but doesn't one rose mean the same?
7. I've been meaning to tell ya--I'm gay.
8. Can you trim that already?
9. Put out.
10. Well, what do you consider romantic?
11. You're not planning on eating all of those chocolates NOW, right?
12. I didn't plan anything special for tonight.
13. What, are you hungry?
14. This is your day today. Do you really need me here?
15. Are you wearing that out?
16. I got an idea... How about a threebie?
17. Order only from this part of the menu.
18. What, you want a gift too?
19. For the last time, can you turn off that fuck-ing Good Charlotte!
20. I was thinking we could skip this whole Valentines thing.

White Ninja gets a heart for Valentine's Day



Scott Bevan + Kent Earle + AQ

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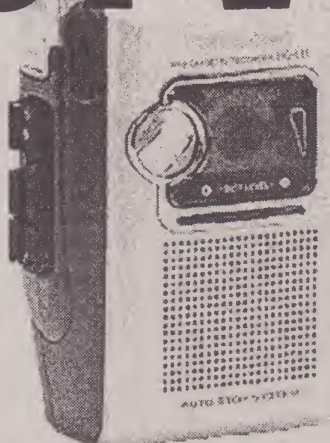
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in order of appearance:

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The Casualties
10 Foot Pole
Scars of Tomorrow
Mike Park
The Higher
The Pale
Anadivine
Crime In Stereo
Harkonen
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the Format

THE FORMAT
By Tiffany Chow

Sometimes the best things in life are completely unexpected. The Format is comprised of two young men, Sam Means and Nate Ruess, who would probably agree wholeheartedly. What began as a desire to jam with another person who shared the same musical vision has turned into the next big thing. In addition, it is guaranteed that The Format does not fit into any genre, yet kids from every scene have fallen in love with the honest and poppy approach the twosome have taken on music.

A conversation with lead singer and songwriter Nate confirms even more their honesty, their openness, and their appeal to any age, taste, and type.

SKRATCH: What were your original intentions for The Format when you first started playing together?

NATE: I think Sam and I were in some bands earlier, and it's hard being in a band and write music, so we decided to do something for ourselves. I was planning on going to school, and Sam had a business. We recorded a demo, and people seemed to like it, so it just kind of took off from there.

SKRATCH: Does Sam still have the business? What kind of business was it? Are you still going to go to school?

NATE: Sam does not have the business anymore. It was a concert-booking business, and he sold it to a bigger company. Me, I hope to one day go to school. I need to learn something. I've just been reading books on The Beatles. I think I am a Beatles specialist at this point.

SKRATCH: In a relatively short time, The Format signed to major label Elektra Records. Did you want this to happen?

NATE: Yeah, I think everybody kind of would like to get signed. When we first found out about it, we were on cloud nine. I think we're still kind of on cloud nine. It's just a crazy thing. I don't think we expected as much as success as we've had thus far... It's just overwhelming for us. We're not used to

stuff—like, any of the stuff. I think we learn a lot every day.

SKRATCH: What kind of "stuff" is different since you've been signed to Elektra?

NATE: Just having people working to back your artistic vision. It's weird having an array of people—whether they're with the label or a manager or a booking agent—[] working with you. It's hard to believe, because it all essentially stems from just writing songs. It's weird to think that Sam and I sitting in a bedroom writing music translates to a bunch of people working with you.

SKRATCH: Do you feel like your music has undergone any changes on this full-length since your first release?

NATE: Oh, completely, we've gone through a ton of changes. We were so young when we first recorded that. I was 19, I think, and although I still consider myself young, I feel like I am getting old. We've been introduced to so many different things in the process. And on top of that, we've just been writing so much different... We've learned different styles of writing. The stuff that we're writing now... Like, Sam and I just wrote a song last night, and I don't know... All I hear right now is a bunch of tuba, something very old and jazzy.

SKRATCH: We look forward to that. Despite any changes in the music, the lyrics are still clever and satirical. Do you feel like your songs reflect your day-to-day feelings?

NATE: Yeah, I think so. I was always worried that I didn't have anything to say, that I didn't have much to complain about or express. Due to all the stuff that's happened recently, a lot of stuff has changed in my personal life; it's made things a lot more crazy, and I have a lot more stuff to write about. And even though I do have a lot more stuff to write about, lately I've just been writing some fictional stories.

SKRATCH: So you kind of like the whole storytelling approach?

NATE: Um, to an extent I do. At the same time, I've gone through a lot of interesting things in my personal life that I can't help but write about.

SKRATCH: So it's a little of both?

NATE: Yeah, it's a little of both. It's made for a lot more interesting writing. Like, I know I'm pretty

close to the lyrics on the INTERVENTIONS AND LULLABIES CD, just because it was a specific time in my life, and I have a hard time hearing those songs because a lot of it has to do with a relationship that I was in at that time. And a lot of the songs were about being in that relationship and wondering whether it was a good thing...because it had been so many years, and you're with someone, and it started to become sort of apathetic. To an extent, you kind of start to worry: "What am I doing in this?" and "Am I still really in love with this person?" So that was a problem, until I got dumped after we finished the record. I didn't know what to do with myself. I think I'd pretty much been in a relationship since I was 16 years old. I was hurt extremely. I didn't know the first thing about meeting people. So I just took a pen to a pad of paper and wrote everything down.

SKRATCH: Well, it made for a great album.

NATE: Yeah, I hope so. I mean, I hope it doesn't make her go crazy or try and kill herself.

SKRATCH: [Laughs] I don't think so. On the new album, "On Your Porch" talks about some difficult issues. Is this all based on a real-life experience?

NATE: The first verse is basically about... It was the last song Sam and I wrote for the record, and we actually wrote it on the porch of the studio just because we were locked out of the studio and we just thought, "Oh, well, let's write a song." The first verse is pretty much being with the person that I loved, and I never told them that I loved them in the song, and they always wondered whether I was writing this negative stuff about them and I would say, "Oh, no, I was basing it on other people's experiences"—but in actuality I was really writing it about them, writing about her, and I did love her. It was basically set to the last night that we had together before I had to go record. It's basically the whole thing it is now, like, it has taken off, and my life has just changed drastically. It's saying that no matter what, when all this stuff happens, I still love you. The second verse just had to do with my parents. My dad has cancer. He's in remission right now, but at the time we were worried. I was a lot younger and a lot more ignorant—and a little too afraid to talk to him about it. (I think I still am now.) It's basically them wishing me luck, and I remember my mom said something to me right before I left: she just told me that me doing music was just making them extremely happy. They had just been



through so many bad times in the last three years with the cancer and his treatments, and everything that this was just giving them something positive to focus on. I found that really flattering, and I felt like I needed to give her those things through that part of the song. And the third verse has to do with Sam and I...and whether or not we were prepared to go through with this, with people's expectations. We had a lot of friends coming and going at the time, old friends, and I think that's what happens at everybody's point in their lives at this age: people come and go, [] especially between graduating high school and college. It's such a changing part in your life. It's good that Sam and I have been able to stick together through all of that.

SKRATCH: That song had even more depth than I thought. Even though it's just Sam and you, you tour with a full band. Is there any plan to take some of these members on full-time and become an official band?

NATE: It's still just Sam and I. We like to think of it as two completely different things, though. We feel like the live band, they're our friends from so far back when, and we had been in bands with those guys before. Our band is sort of different. Sam and I like to have creative control. We're very personal about our music, and we see the exact same thing. That's why we started the band in the first place: [so] that the two of us would be working together, just the two of us. But those guys with the live band,

it's a different thing. We feel like we have a band on stage, and we don't [feel as if] like it's Sam and I and these are just backing guys. It's more like: This is the band.

SKRATCH: I definitely got that feel when I saw you guys. I questioned whether you had become a full band because you played so united. It didn't seem like you guys were leading; it was more of a full band effort.

NATE: It is pretty much a full band effort, [including] the way I feel about the guys specifically, too. We're all such close friends that it should be no other way than that. On top of that, they're good ambassadors for us, they're good people, they represent what we do well, and I don't think Sam and I would be nearly as good if it wasn't for them.

SKRATCH: You guys have been on tour with a lot of big acts and have been touring extensively this past year. Can you tell me about some of your more memorable moments or shows?

NATE: We're the most boring band ever. I think three of us don't even drink. We're very boring, and since we're all friends, it's almost like...seven friends hanging out. I think that, at the same time, everybody kind of gets a little tired of each other to an extent. Because we're friends, we don't fight in a serious manner; it starts to get playful. If things start to get hot and heavy in terms of arguing, somebody will crack a joke, and everybody will laugh. Some memorable moments, hm? We all grow

moustaches.

SKRATCH: Really? Did you have a competition, like who can grow it the longest without shaving?

NATE: Um, somewhat. I think we tried to go the longest. It's more of who can grow a full beard. I can't grow anything. I can grow a wicked Michael Jackson dirt-stache, so I try that as much as possible. Some people can't grow a moustache; other people in the band are like, 'It's looking good, it's shaping up.' Don (our bass player), he can grow a really nice, really big moustache.

SKRATCH: You have also played a wide range of different tours, from playing shows with Ozma and Piebald, then a short stint with hardcore band Every Time I Die, and now a few nights with Sugarcult. Why so many different types of scenes?

NATE: I don't think we really fit into anything, and so I think we'll just tour with anybody who will take us out. Right now, we're fighting [] pretty hard to get on tour with Rufus Wainwright. That's my old dream: to tour with him. I know Sam, and I just want to play as many shows as possible in front of as many different types of people as possible.

SKRATCH: Is there any particular crowd you prefer playing for?

NATE: No, I don't think so. For the most part, the reaction's been positive [no matter the crowd], which is always a good thing. Other than that, I think if you're going to a concert, for the most part you're a big fan of music. If

you're a fan of music, you kind of appreciate whoever's playing, any ways. We've been fortunate that we've had shows that have been like that for us. And most of those bands [we've played with] are really courteous people.

SKRATCH: If you had to give up playing one of your songs ever again, which song would you find it easiest to let go?

NATE: To stop playing? Hmm. Well, I make the set list, so I could make us stop playing any song at any time. [Laughs] I'm the hatchet man. To not play: probably 'The First Single' because it is just very straining on my voice; or 'Sore Thumb', just because—although I think it's a good song—I think it least describes us.

SKRATCH: What's on the horizon for The Format? You mentioned possibly a tour with Rufus Wainwright. What other kinds of things lie ahead?

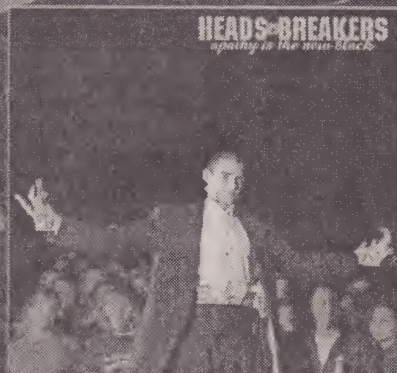
NATE: Hopefully, that tour with Rufus Wainwright—that would be a dream come true. Other than that, we're taking this next month off for the most part. I'm going to move to New York City. Then, in January, I know the single goes to radio. I know Sam and I just plan on touring from then on out.

The Format truly has something great going for them. With their album having dropped in the fall of 2003 and 'The First Single' due to hit the radios in January, this period in their career is definitely just a waiting period before they will blow up.



"I mean, I hope it doesn't make her go crazy or try and kill herself."

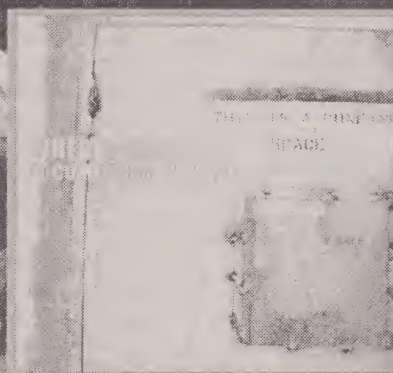
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THE CASUALTIES

THE CASUALTIES
By Janelle Jones

On pretty much the eve of the release of The Casualties' latest LP, the visceral **ON THE FRONT LINE**, a brazen wallop of unadulterated hardcore punk highlighted by a more refined socio-political stance than usual, I spoke with guitarist Jake, who's been a part of the now-legendary band since '93...and who rather adamantly declares this line-up himself, vocalist Jorge, bassist Rick, and drummer Meggersto be the last. Speaking via cell phone while driving, Jake expounded on the new record, their month-long European tour, and how he doesn't want to be considered an "old band." Yeah, we don't want to see The Casualties rocking out in sweat pants anytime soon. (See below for reference.)

SKRATCH: You guys recently got back from Europe. How were the shows?
JAKE: The shows were great. The only thing we didn't like...like England was like...I'm trying to think.... England was awful, except for London and Sheffield. We played like seven shows, and two were worth it, (while at) the other five shows (there) were like 20 people coming out and nobody was buying any merch, no one was dancing...It was terrible, you know? But mainland Europe like Belgium, Holland, Germany, and Italy (especially Italy) at all the shows there were like at least 300 people a show, so they were really good.

SKRATCH: You're not playing Wasted (formerly Holidays in the Sun) this year, right?

JAKE: No, we're not doing it this year, 'cause it's gonna be like...Usually during the summer we're busy: we're either doing Warped Tour or we're doing our own thing, you know? I mean, I'd love to get over there and play Wasted this year, but it's just not gonna happen. The Warped Tour is way more important for us. Those tours like...well, I mean, the Wasted festival isn't a tour, it's just one show, and it's all old bands, you know? And after a couple times you get really sick of it. It's just bands reforming, and I don't wanna be grouped in with, I don't wanna be like an old band. We never broke up and got back together, you know? So....

SKRATCH: There's a couple like F-Minus is playing.

JAKE: Yeah, that's true, there are a couple, you're right. It's gotten better than it used to be, but it's still kinda like, "Okay, you know, who's getting back together this time?" And some of them aren't even punk rock anymore. (Laughs) Some guys get up there in sweat pants and sneakers and then go home! Yeah, it's just like, been a really busy

schedule. We definitely have to go on Warped Tour (...) but I'd still like to do it, you know? We did the first in '96, before any American band ever did it.

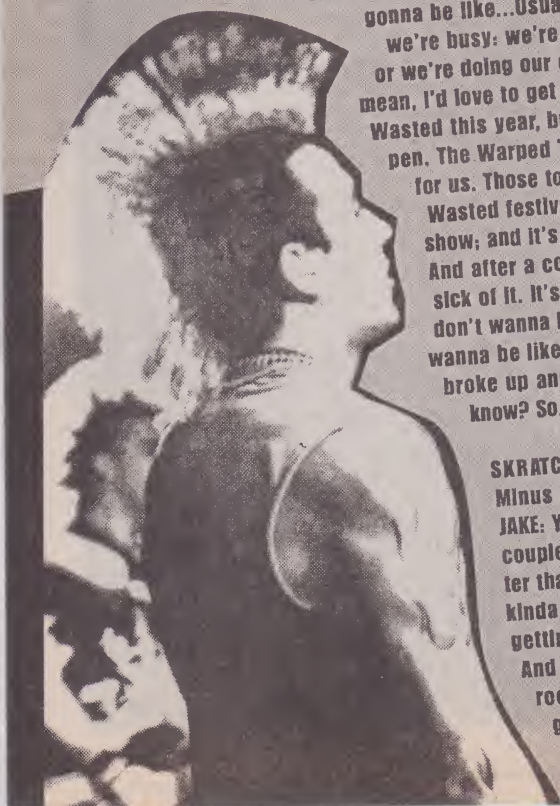
SKRATCH: Just taking from the past couple of years, especially last year, Warped's really somewhat of a pop-punk-/emo-type thing now, you know what I'm saying? Like last year, the line-up
JAKE: Yeah, I agree with you. I'll be honest with you: most everybody on the Warped Tour is really cool like, nobody's ever been a dick to us on that. BUT, I don't like 90% of the bands. It's cool to see Bad Religion every night, and it's cool to see (I guess) Lars (Frederiksen) and the Bastards are gonna be playing, and that should be cool. Once in a while seeing NOFX and, you know, some bands like that, but I don't really care for the bands that are all over AP, you know? I don't really care for them. Like all the emo-/hardcore-/metal-type bands I could care less, just 'cause I like straight-up hardcore punk rock, and there's very little of that, you know? Last year we had Wanted Dead. That was cool, but there isn't a lot of that, you

WE LOOK UP
WE LOVE UP
WE LOVE UP

know?

SKRATCH: Yeah, okay. About the new record, you guys have always had a socio-political edge, but now it's been taken to the next level. Was this a conscious effort, or did it just happen when you were writing?

JAKE: It just kind of happened when we were writing. I mean, it's a lot of things (...) We sing about what goes on around us. And what's going on right now? It's like our government's doing...Like when Clinton was in office, there wasn't that much bad shit going. I mean, okay, there's always lousy things happening. But then Bush gets in office and drags us into this war that NOBODY wanted. And we're not like a political band, but (...) that affects us, so we're gonna write songs about it, and just things like that. I had a good friend who turned into a junkie, and we have a song about that. And just like how America's getting to be so capitalistic that it's become harder and harder for the lower classes to even survive 'cause we're paying everything out of our wallets. And it's like where you used to be able to just live, now it's like they find more and more things to make laws about, and they take a little more freedom, just a little bit, a little bit of freedom, a little bit of freedom, until we got a law for everything a law for laws, which is ridiculous. (Pauses as he pays a toll) Yeah, I just think like (about the) Big Brother (ideal), too, like video cameras on every corner of every street now, you know? even streets that aren't dangerous. So it's just weird. A lot of things like that, you know? We're singing about different topics. I don't wanna put out the



same record every time; it's gotta be about different things.

SKRATCH: What's the most pressing message you're trying to get across with this record?

JAKE: Just to be aware of what's going on around you like socially and we still talk about...well, you know, the same things we usually press: just like do what's right for you and take a look around. This is what we think is going on, you know, and we tell what we see. And we

also address still that punk is a way of life for us. And for us, it is a way of life, so we put that down and that's how I think punk rock should be.

SKRATCH: How do you think people will react to it?

JAKE: I don't know. Like our diehard fans are gonna like it 'cause it's probably our hardest record yet (...) Sound-wise, it's really hard; but we still got a happy song at the end like on most of our records. (...) And I think a lot of new fans are gonna get turned on to it because it's gonna be in a lot of record stores, and I think people are gonna like it 'cause it's not like metal, but it's not like happy, emotional bullshit. It's real music, like we've been doing for over 10 years already, so I think it'll be that outlet for that kid who wants to get into something hard; but it doesn't have to be like that nu-metal bullshit/Korn stuff. It's punk rock a little more substance, you know? It's not gonna be like some fuckin' garbage Ozzfest stuff, you know?

SKRATCH: (Laughs) What do you attribute your continued relevance to? You've been around a long time, and you're still getting bigger and bigger.

JAKE: People are getting more into punk rock, and I think that we have the music, and we also have sort of an image that people are interest-

ed in, so they check it out right there. And, you know, we love it. We look it, we live it, we love it. That's why we've done it. We used to come home from tours with no money at all; we'd owe money, you know? And we just kept working at it. I've been in the band almost 11 years, and, like I said, we just kept at it as hard as we could, and eventually it just paid off. Well, I mean, we're doing good now. I don't know how long it'll stay like that, but, you know, I'm happy where it is. We all get along pretty good, but sometimes it took kicking people out 'cause they were into heroin and shit like that. You can't let drugs ruin your band.

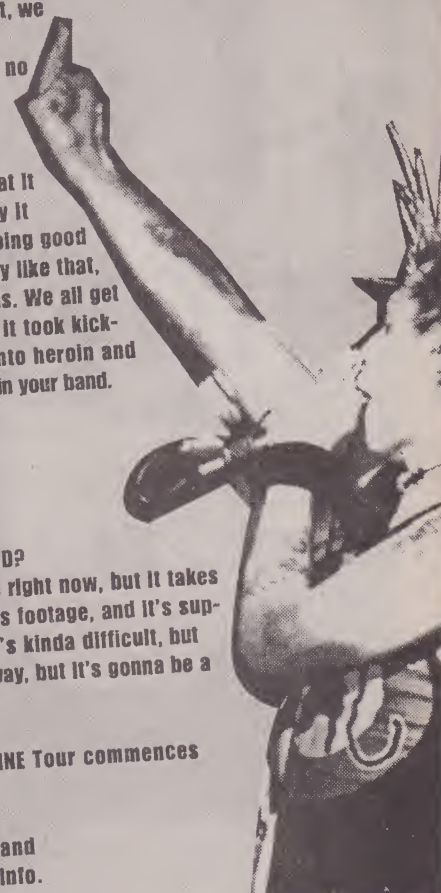
It's a lot of things. It's like a little family: you gotta keep the family together.

SKRATCH: You're putting out a DVD?

JAKE: Yeah, we're working on one right now, but it takes a long time, 'cause we got all this footage, and it's supposed to be getting compiled. It's kinda difficult, but we're working on it. It's on it's way, but it's gonna be a little while yet. (Laughs)

The Casualties' ON THE FRONT LINE Tour commences February 19th.

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10 FOOT POLE

10 FOOT POLE

Interview By Don Sill

Photo by Kevin Ruggeri

Ten Foot Pole is no stranger to problems. Throughout their 11-year history, the punk band has encountered their fair share of member changes, label-hopping, and even death (bassist Leigh Lawson suddenly passed away from an enlarged heart in 2000). Now, as Ten Foot Pole moves on with their sixth full-length release, *SUBLIMINAL MESSAGES*, they face yet another dilemma, as Victory Records pulled the plug on the band, forcing them to row upstream without a paddle.

SKRATCH caught up with Ten Foot Pole's main man, Dennis Jagard, while in the middle of the scramble. We spoke about the recent falling out with Victory and what the future holds for Ten Foot Pole and *SUBLIMINAL MESSAGES*.

SKRATCH: What the hell happened with Victory?

JAGARD: Man, we had a fallout with Victory Records.

SKRATCH: What happened?

JAGARD: It just seems that every single label owner is pretty eccentric. Everyone who is successful is the music industry seems to have some kind of insanity or some kind of eccentricity—particularly punk-rock label owners. Some of it is in a good way, and some of it is not. In this case, we had a really rough time.

SKRATCH: How so?

JAGARD: Well, let me rewind. When my other guitar player left the band, we had been long-term business partners, and I actually paid him a big chunk of money to basically buy him out so that there wouldn't be any hard feelings. I mean, I bought the equipment off of him and what not. So, from that time forward, I figure I spent about \$40,000 on the band within the last year.

SKRATCH: Holy shit.

JAGARD: Yeah, because I paid for the recording of this album, and we thought that [Victory] was gonna reimburse us, but they didn't. So, basically, I just paid for this whole album and a year's worth of expenses.

SKRATCH: So, they stuck you with the bill?

JAGARD: Basically, yeah.

SKRATCH: Ten Foot Pole has been around for over a decade now. You guys have had your share of ups and downs: member changes, death, and now this label business. After everything, what keeps you going?

JAGARD: I'm just driven to do it. I can't say exactly why. I mean, part of it is that I feel like I'm getting better, and I don't want people to remember Ten Foot Pole for when I sounded like a little 14-year-old, polite kid. For sure when I started, my voice was like a little kid's. I mean, I wasn't singing that hard, because the softer you sing, the easier it is to sing in pitch, so the producers used to kinda tell me not to try so hard, because I'd go off-key and then I'd end up with this wimpy-sounding vocal. So I just want to show the world what Ten Foot Pole has become.

SKRATCH: And how you matured.

JAGARD: Yeah. When we play live, we're a lot more intense than a lot of our albums would make you think. [...] I would like to continue doing it as long as I feel there's progress. Hopefully, the kids will like it and get it and make it, so we can afford to keep doing it.

SKRATCH: So Victory Records will not put out *SUBLIMINAL MESSAGES*?

JAGARD: No, we're done.

SKRATCH: So this album is going out indie style, or are you looking for a new label?

JAGARD: I don't know yet. [Laughs] Basically, I'm waiting to get a few mixes before I send it out, and I want to make sure that I am completely legally done with Victory, because they've been known to convince a band that they're dropped, and then when the band goes on and finds a new label, Victory comes out and says that they own the band and that if you want them then you gotta pay us a whole bunch of money. So we want to make sure we're completely dropped and owe them nothing before we find a new sucker. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: Any label biting yet?

JAGARD: Well, we're talking to everyone. Of course we're talking with Fat Wreck Chords and Epitaph, and we're starting to get some interest going. But we're also arranging it so that we can put it out ourselves if we need to. We don't want to be held up. I don't want to hang around until some label gets interested; I want to just get it out there ourselves. Maybe in the long run a label will pick us up, depending on how we do.

SKRATCH: Yeah, you put it out indie style, and a label can sign you and re-release the album through them.

JAGARD: I already arranged distribution and foreign licensing, and I got tours already in the works, so basically we can do it ourselves. Look, it's never been my goal to own a record label. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: Well, you did it before with SWILL.

JAGARD: Yeah, and it's funny, because SWILL actually sold more copies than BAD MOTHER TRUCKER had, and that was on Victory Records. We just weren't real excited how Victory handled that album. That goes to show you that if an album that we did on our own can sell more than one with the mighty Victory Records behind it, then something's wrong.

SKRATCH: Damn right. You proved that you could make it happen.

JAGARD: Right on.

SKRATCH: But, all in all, it must feel good to be freed from Victory.

JAGARD: It feels really good. I mean, it's stressful because I put so much of my own money on the line, and a lot of things have happened to me. I mean, I'm not a rich guy. When I say 40 grand, it's not like I had that 40 grand sitting around; I went into debt.

SKRATCH: So, you certainly have a lot invested in this.

JAGARD: Yeah, I do. I also have a seven-month-old boy. Me and my wife had a baby, so I can't fool around; I gotta make this work. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: That adds a whole new pressure to the mix.

JAGARD: It's a good pressure. It's a great thing, but the I just can't fail—like, I have to provide. It's one thing if you're poor and on your own, but when you bring a kid into the world, then you gotta buy those diapers. [Laughs] I think it'll work out. It's stressful to not have a record label, but it's a huge relief, because there were a lot of things about Victory that were very sketchy and we never knew what was going down and were always walking on egg shells.

SKRATCH: Right. And like you said, you didn't even like how they released **BAD MOTHER TRUCKER**.

JAGARD: Man, I just had such high hopes for everything. But there was just a lot of stuff going down when we released **BAD MOTHER TRUCKER**. For example, there was a bunch of

people who got fired from Victory right when we were in the middle of our big tour. Things were falling apart then. There was just a lot of different changes.

SKRATCH: Well, **SUBLIMINAL MESSAGES** is coming out, label or not.

JAGARD: This album is a lot better than the last one, and we have so much more going for it.

SKRATCH: A whole new slate.

JAGARD: Yeah. I'm looking forward to it.

SKRATCH: When is this album due out?

JAGARD: It's all up in the air now.

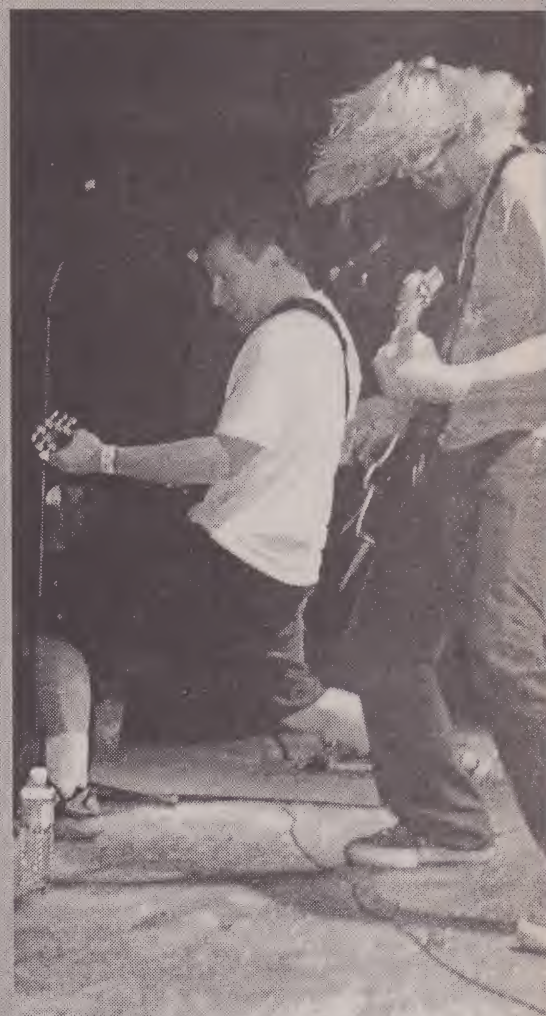
SKRATCH: No precise date?

JAGARD: No, we don't know when it's gonna happen, because if we do sign with another label, it will be up to them how long it'll take. Right now, realistically, I don't think it'll be released before April, just because the amount of time it takes to get anything done. I would like to have it out in time for our European tour, which kicks off April 24th.

SKRATCH: Well, 2004 is a big year for you, man. You got a lot on the line.

JAGARD: Yeah, it's really exciting. The main thing is that I have an album that I'm proud of. [...] So now, even if I retire tomorrow, at least I made this album. I think it speaks for itself. I made something that I'm damn proud of.

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SCARS OF TOMORROW:
Interview By Don Sill
Photos By Mike Lythcott

Orange County metalcore outfit Scars of Tomorrow are bringing a sense of hope to a negative generation with their powerful Victory Records debut, *ROPE TIED TO THE TRIGGER*. The album was recorded this past November with producer Kurt Ballou and will hit stores on February 24th. Songs such as "From My Existence", "Suffocating Words", and "Design Your Fate" deliver a fierce sound and deep, insightful lyrics that'll inspire listeners to free their hearts from their troubles and themselves from society's confines. Drummer Chris, guitarists Dave and Carlos, singer Mike, and bassist Bob are prepping for a North American tour this spring and are psyched to deliver their heavy brand of uplifting metalcore to the masses.

SKRATCH spoke with Mike about his band, their message, and *ROPE TIED TO THE TRIGGER*.

SKRATCH: What is it that drives you and this band?

MIKE: Man, we just want to come up with something that hasn't been come up with, and we just want to explore with this music that we're writing. We've been around for four years now. It started off because we all just wanted to be in a band, but [then] our shows just kept getting better and bet-

ter, and it drove us to want to do more and more with our music and for the crowd.

SKRATCH: You guys are from the O.C.

MIKE: Yeah.

SKRATCH: What is it about Orange County that seems to bring out such hardcore, angst-fueled bands?

MIKE: Man, Orange County has a big history of always having awesome bands that have always been coming outta here, like Strife, Throwdown, and Eighteen Visions [...]. It's just a place with so many bands to look up to, and everybody just drives themselves to become more talented musicians. There's a lot of new bands that a lot of people don't even know about. The talent out here is just amazing. That's what awesome about the O.C. There's always good shows going on and always good tours coming through because everybody wants to play here. Orange County rules.

SKRATCH: Right on. Man, you guys are intense. Your sound is heavy and passionate. Take me through the songwriting process. What is it that sparks your creative juices?

MIKE: For me, I think there's a lot of bands out there that are singing about the wrong type of things. They're not going straight to how they really feel, and they only care about what other people

will think. See, there's a lot of things that I want to say. I may not say it in a direct way, but I like people to think a little bit and actually think about the lyrics, you know? But there's a lot of bad stuff in this world—a lot of good stuff, too—but there's so much stuff that needs to be changed.

SKRATCH: What needs to be changed?

MIKE: I'd just have people free their heart from the troubles that hit them. There's so much bottled-up anger and rage, and a lot of it is just for no reason. Like, there's so many conflicts and battles that could be so easily worked out if they would just talk about it instead of keeping everything inside. Just free your heart and leave it open. There's so much more out there.

SKRATCH: So, you basically free your heart through your music?


MIKE: Yeah, exactly. I try and connect with the crowd as much as I can. Before and after we play, we have kids that come up to us and tell us that our lyrics really did something for them. That's what really drives me, you know?

SKRATCH: Yeah: you're reaching people.

MIKE: Yeah, and that's what makes me want to continue and keep going.

SKRATCH: Some of your lyrics get kind of dark.

SCARS OF TOMORROW



MIKE: Yeah, but [I also] I come back around and say some really positive stuff, too.

SKRATCH: The track "From My Existence" is pretty powerful. Take me through that tune.

MIKE: When we were writing that song I tried to think of the emotion while I was listening to the band play the tune. The main chorus, "Erase your face from my existence," was just totally hitting me at the time.

SKRATCH: What does it mean?

MIKE: Just about things in general that I would like to be erased—you know, the past. But then I realize that you can't do that; things will always be there. But those words that came out of me in that songs are just really powerful. There's a person in general that I'm talking about, and the opening line's, "You are a child born into a dead world," and it's just about their ideals and how they don't grow up and they just see everything as negative and can't see that there is so much more to life then they think it is.

SKRATCH: Who was it written about?

MIKE: It's about a close person that I know. I mean, it's not that I hate them or anything, it's just something about them that I don't think is right.

SKRATCH: But there is a lot of people that view the world as a "dead world" and can't see the hope in it. But you can see some hope?

MIKE: Oh, I definitely do. I mean, on certain occasions I come across people who are so down, and I try and show them that there is a different way, like, "Hey, man, there's always hope." If I can give them new hope and lift up their day, then that's big for me. Too many people think negatively, and that's not cool.

SKRATCH: I think that if you think negative, then negative things will happen.

MIKE: Exactly.

SKRATCH: When kids go to see you guys live, what are they in store for?

MIKE: There in store for a lot of energy; a lot of our thoughts and emotions will be poured. We pour out everything at every show. Home shows are crazy. Lots of kids are into it and singing my words.

SKRATCH: Kids are really vibing off your ideology and what you have to say.

MIKE: Yeah. It gives me the chills on some of the songs when the kids pile up on me, man. It's just cool that people are actually reading through the lyric book and aren't just burning the CD.

SKRATCH: So, what's the main thing you want kids to walk away with after listening to ROPE TIED TO THE TRIGGER?

MIKE: Just a sense of hope, because so many people just don't have any these days.

**"THAT'S
WHAT AWE-
SOME
ABOUT THE
O.C.
THERE'S
ALWAYS
GOOD
SHOWS
GOING ON
AND
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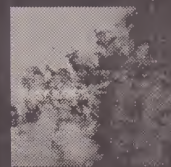
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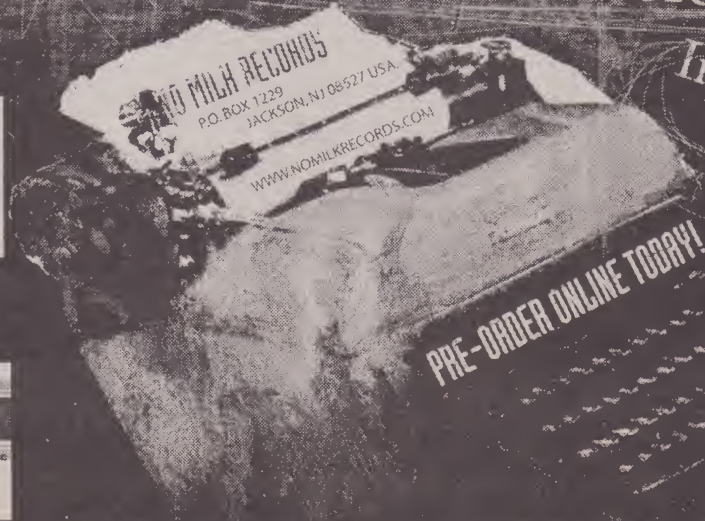
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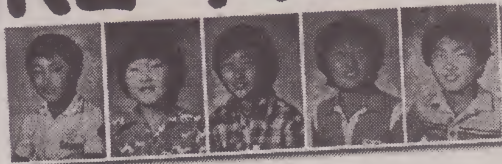
Interview by Ryan Pangilinan
photos from mikeparkmusic.com

If you don't know who Mike Park is, perhaps you need to have your head examined. Or is it possible that you had a lobotomy that you've already forgotten about? Mike Park's career within the punk genre has spanned well over a decade. He played in the now-legendary Skankin' Pickle, fronted The Chinkees, and even found time to form a side band with his friends in Less Than Jake called The Bruce Lee Band. But many would probably know Mike Park from the two projects that he's been spearheading for the last eight and five years, respectively: Asian Man Records and Plea for Peace Foundation. Asian Man is one of the few remaining truly D.I.Y. operations (much of which is staged from his parents' garage) and has seen some releases from Alkaline Trio, Duvall, and The Lawrence Arms. Plea for Peace is a non-profit organization, and its message is pretty self-explanatory. The foundation has been able to put on some pretty big tours (including this year's featuring Saddle Creek's Cursive) and a string of successful compilations.

Speaking from the Asian Man office, Park enlightened SKRATCH with talk



MIKE PARK



of his projects, as well as his solo debut, *FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC* (Hopeless/Sub City).

SKRATCH: You've finally put together a solo album. Why did it take so long?

MIKE: Basically, not having time. It was something that got pushed aside. It came down to new releases and tours, and it got pushed aside. Time kept passing me by. So I took a few months and focused on the record.

SKRATCH: What's different from your solo work to the other bands that you've fronted (The Chinkees and The Bruce Lee Band)?

MIKE: The Bruce Lee Band had no effort put into it. It was '94 when we did that. It was a side project that we jammed out and recorded. The final product sounded good at the time—but looking back at it, not so much. The Chinkees was my band to keep putting out songs in ska music. With this [solo album], it's a singer/songwriter's dream: to put out a record with emphasis on melodies and music. It gives me an outlet to tour. It allows a lot of freedom.

SKRATCH: When was your first tour as a solo artist?

MIKE: The 2000 Plea for Peace tour. Then I did it again in 2001.

SKRATCH: You've been able to successfully run Asian Man as a real D.I.Y. label, which is one of the last remaining labels (along with Hopeless and Kung Fu) that run with no major-label backing. How have you kept it going for so long?

MIKE: That's how you run it: you have an objective. The purpose of Asian Man was to keep it small—make it a novelty, in some regards, make it have human emotion instead of a bar code. We kept it small. As long as there are no expectations of us by the bands, it's an easy [relationship]. The goal is to make it fun. The business is in a sad state. I want to develop my own rules.

SKRATCH: And as a result, you've even kept good relationship with bands that have moved on.

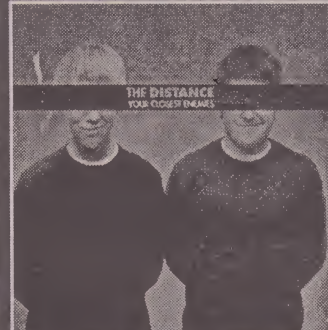
MIKE: Yeah. It's about helping your friends.

SKRATCH: Why do you think other labels are less

THE DISTANCE

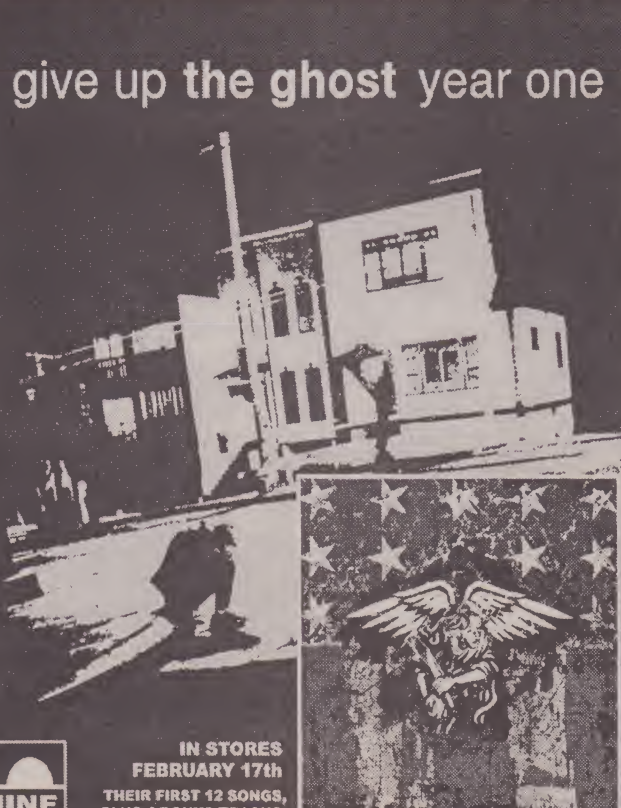
YOUR CLOSEST ENEMIES

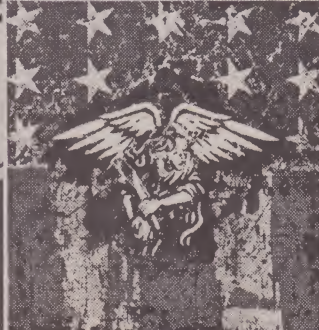





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willing to have that kind of attitude?

MIKE: It comes down to pride. For me, I don't care.

SKRATCH: Asian Man is also one of the few labels that advocates the punk ideology of having an anti-racist movement. Other than the obvious [Writer's note: Park is Korean], why support this movement when people who will subscribe to it already do and those who don't will continue to consume music without a message?

MIKE: I can't change the world; I can only build a community with my label. We're trying to do something different, not just as a punk community, but as humans. It's important to use [media] to better our society, to teach them about common decency and let them have more options.

SKRATCH: Along with the anti-racist movement, you're also an icon for Asian-Americans. I



"It's about helping your friends."



always thought it was cool that you were playing in the bands that I listened to when there are very few Asian-Americans playing rock music to see someone who likes the same music with the same face.

MIKE: I like the idea. You don't have support from your family, and there are no Asian faces in music. To have an Asian-American kid interested in punk music...I feel it's my job [to encourage them]. I take it seriously. When I get letters from Asian-Americans, I answer them appropriately. I wish I had more time. With me touring again, I'll have an opportunity to talk face to face.

SKRATCH: Songs like "Don't Sit Next

to Me Just Because I'm Asian" are, in a roundabout way, powerful. It's a funny song, but it's built on the notion of stereotyping people.

MIKE: It's true. It's comical, but it's the truth. And it's not just Asians who'd understand that song; it's [for] anybody who's ever been stereotyped.

SKRATCH: You have the Plea for Peace tour coming up soon. Who are you going out with?

MIKE: The band Cursive from Omaha. They're headlining; I'm one of the supporting acts.

SKRATCH: That's an interesting bill and an interesting crowd. Both you

and Tim Kasher [Cursive's frontman] are both legends in your own rights. You'll both bring in an interesting mix of people.

MIKE: I'm really curious, but all I can do is offer the songs. For those who don't care, I do what I can.

SKRATCH: Do you have any goals? It seems that you've accomplished so much in a short amount of time.

MIKE: Not really. I'd like to make music a part of my life again. Travel. Meet people face to face. I'd like to do that and more activist work, make Plea for Peace stronger. It might have to be me choosing between Asian Man and Plea for Peace, but hopefully I could do both.

SKRATCH: Do you think you could do both? Asian Man is a relatively successful indie label.

MIKE: I think I get lumped in the wrong pile. We're a small label, but we've put out huge releases. Epitaph is double our size. Vagrant has a lot of people working for them. We just have two people. The bigger you get, the more headaches.

Truer words were never spoken. Mike Park's solo album is available now, and his upcoming tour with Cursive will begin in the spring. Until then, he'll be playing a string of dates throughout California.

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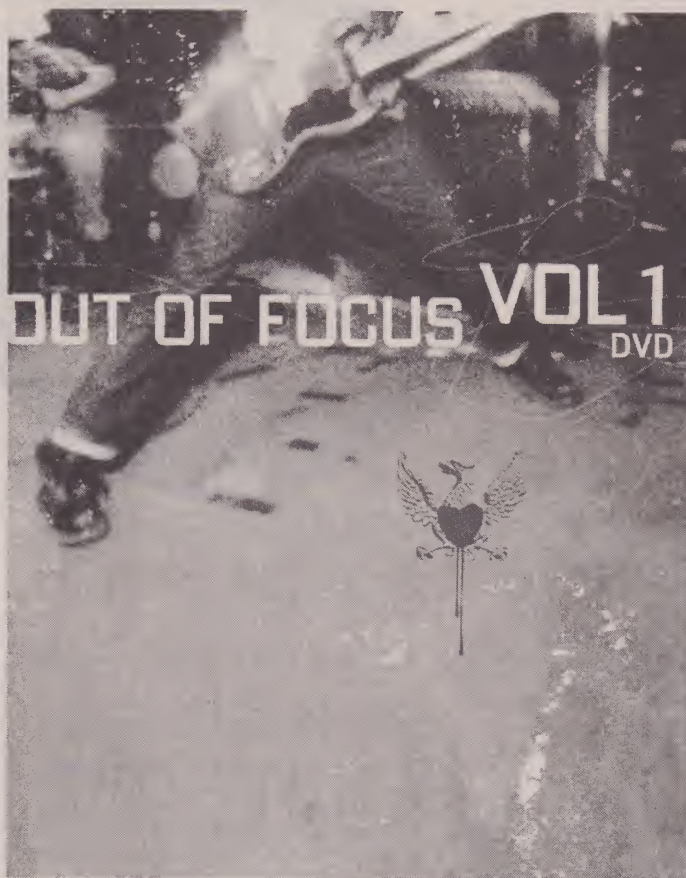


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THE HIGHER

THE HIGHER
By Courtney Davis

If you have been paying attention to local bands in Las Vegas, you already know that The Higher is one of the most musically-devoted bands of the scene. Therefore, it is no surprise that they are climbing the scale at warp speed. Prior to being signed to Fiddler Records (a side project of Drive Thru Records), The Higher had gone through just one year of playing with their current line-up. They had become regulars at the Huntridge, one of the more popular venues in Las Vegas, growing so popular that their classmates quickly became avid fans who would wear homemade T-shirts displaying the band's previous name, September Star. Shortly after being signed, they've completed their first LP on Fiddler, *STAR IS DEAD*.

Get to know The Higher for yourself.

SKRATCH: Introduce yourselves and what you do in the band.

JASON: My name is Jason, and I play bass.

PAT: I'm Pat, and I play drums.

TOM: I'm Tom, and I play guitar.

JAMES: I'm James, and I play guitar

SETH: I'm Seth, and I sing.

SKRATCH: How many times have you guys done that line-up thing?

The HIGHER: A lot: 47...I don't know...16...16...400...

SKRATCH: Okay, so this is your CD-release party we have here...right? Am I fucking wrong? Am I right?

THE HIGHER: Yes, yes it is, you are right.

SKRATCH: So, tell me about the CD—who produced it and all that stuff we don't know yet.

TOM: A man named Beau Burchell produced our EP and...it came out...

JASON: Go buy it.

TOM: It has five songs. It came out on the 28th [of October], but that doesn't really matter. It's out now, so go get it. It's called *STAR IS DEAD*.

JASON: It'll be everywhere. It's universally distributed, so it'll be everywhere. You can get it in Hawaii.

SKRATCH: Did you guys have a lot of say in the production?

SETH: He pretty much let us do what we wanted to do. He's like, "If you guys have any ideas, pitch in your ideas." [...]

TOM: He just did just what he does: just record it. He's very good at it.

SKRATCH: You guys are from Vegas. There aren't a lot of bands that make it out of this place, so I want to give you your...props? And you guys are pretty young...

TOM: We're still in town. We just got a record deal, and we're about to go on tour, so we're excited about that; but we're still five kids from Vegas. Being signed gives us an opportunity to play in front people.

JASON: If [other bands] want to do it, to just practice every day, every single day...like six hours. It'll be hard as hell, but that's what we did.

SKRATCH: How long were you guys together before you got signed?

TOM: A year.

PAT: It was actually a little longer than that but we got Tom in the band about a year ago.

SKRATCH: Which bands are you really excited about touring with?

SETH: Uh...Name Taken, mainly. [Chad Atkinson from Name Taken is sitting on the couch.]



TOM: We want to go out with whoever wants to take us out...and we want to play a show wherever anyone will let us play a show.

PAT: At girls' houses...anywhere in the country...if they want...if it's alright with their mom.

JASON: I'll take the mom.

SKRATCH: What kind of deal did you sign with Fiddler?

TOM: We signed for a few records. Fiddler will be putting out our next record. Fiddler is...yeah, it's our home.

SKRATCH: Tell me something about the person sitting next to you that they might not want you to tell me.

JASON: Oh, man! [Laughs] I don't know if I can say this! [Laughs] We're all gonna get fucked up right now!

SETH: Don't say anything. You know....just say something stupid.

JASON: Alright, alright. I had a good one, though. [...] I don't wanna say anything about Pat, 'cause he's so good, I love him. Alright: Pat's from England. His mom has an English accent.

JAMES: Pat never had a job.

JASON: Pat never had a job in his life, never ever. [Pat nods]

JASON: He's so lazy. He plays drums. That's all he does. **PAT:** Tom's really my twin brother. We didn't find each other at first. We found each other when he joined the band and through, like...DNA testing.

JASON: Tell her about Dave Grohl.

PAT: We found out we're related to Dave Grohl. He's our cousin.

SKRATCH: Really?!

TOM: Uh, we're brothers, but Dave Grohl's not our cousin. James has a Suzuki sidekick with a zip-lock hood.

THE HIGHER: [Laughs]

JAMES: Uh...Seth sings like a...little girl, Christina Aguilera-style.

PAT: With a

giant...



"OH, AND I LOVE SHAMPOO. PLEASE PUT THIS IN THE MAGAZINE: "

JAMES: With a giant what? With a giant bear?
SETH: Jay ate 10 pieces of pizza tonight. He likes food...in case you guys wondered.

SKRATCH: If each of you could be in any band during any time period, which band would it be?

JASON: [blank stare]

SKRATCH: We'll come back to you.

PAT: Fleetwood Mac or The Who.

JASON: Boyz II Men. I would like to be in Boyz II Men.

TOM: Blink 182.

PAT: Sublime.

SETH: Justin Timberlake, man—N'SYNC.

SKRATCH: What's your first memory of music? When did you first fall in love with music?

JASON: When I would sit in the car, my dad used to make me name every band that was on the radio. That was like our thing we did in the car. That's when I fell in love with it.

SKRATCH: What bands were on the radio then?

JASON: Led Zeplin to Rob Zombie to...Rush...just everything. He'd be like, "Okay, who is this?" Like...Social Distortion...everything from everywhere.

PAT: I don't really remember, 'cause my dad was always into music, and I was just, like, always around music.

TOM: Our dad was always into music. We love music. [...] We used to take baths together and stuff, and our dad would just used to put music on, and we would enjoy it.

JAMES: Probably my sister. She used to be into a lot of bands like Nirvana and Dinosaur Jr. and weird shit like that back when I was younger, so ever since that I got into music—this style, I guess.

SETH: Well, I've been singing since I was born, so...I don't know. I came out singin', came out screamin' and came out singin'.

PAT & JASON: Came out screamin', singin', and still pimpin'.

SETH: Still pimpin'.

SKRATCH: What's your vice?

JASON: My vice is food, dude. I love food.

PAT: I love...music...my drums.

TOM: I love Hilary Duff...if Hilary Duff can be a vice.

JAMES: I love my Sidekick.

SETH: Um, .my biggest vice? I like to, uh...dance around in trees.

SKRATCH: Naked?

SETH: No, just hangin' out with trees, ya know?

PAT: You love shampoo.

SETH: Oh, and I LOVE shampoo. Please put this in the magazine: I LOVE shampoo.

SKRATCH: [To James] Hey, you look like Zachary Davidson from Vendetta Red. You ever get that?

JASON: He looks like Serg from The Early November.

SKRATCH: [To Pat] You look like Bert.

PAT: Who?

SKRATCH: Bert McCracken from The Used.

JASON: Pat looks like Joe Schmo.

SKRATCH: I don't know who that is.

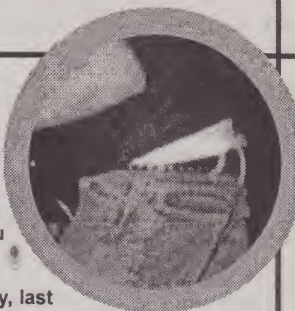
PAT: Yeah, well, you should. That's my new vice: Joe Shmo is my new vice. And my ADvice is that you watch it.

SKRATCH: Okay, okay, last one. What do you say to every-one out there?

TOM: Bye. We love you guys. Come see our show if we're in your town. Buy our EP. It's called STAR IS DEAD. It's in stores. Come talk to us. We love our music, and we want you to love our music, too.

SETH: To any local bands that are trying to make it: dude, it's all about practice and persistence, man. Every local band has a chance—you just gotta put your heart in it.

In a rush the boys head out to the stage area to watch the last of the set. Seth and James, who I've come to know as the quieter members, hang back to thank me. I am thanked with hugs, not handshakes, then I am left in the room alone and feeling a little unsatisfied. 11 minutes and 44 seconds isn't enough time to get everything that you need out of five people to feel like you've reached any level of actually discovering who they are. Earlier in the night someone asked me if the interview was for ROLLING STONE. Who knows? Maybe next time it will be.



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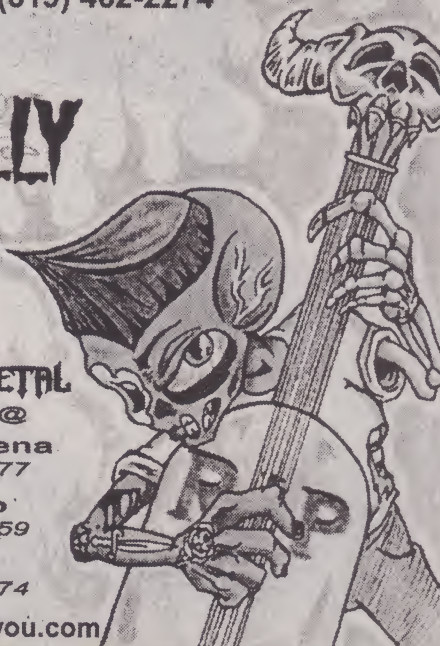
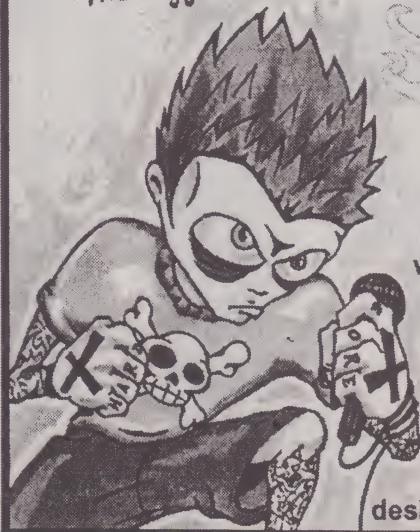
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THE PALE

By Tiffany Chow

It seems like the underground music scene is entering a period of both mediocrity and staleness. The demand for a refreshing, likeable, and truly innovative sound is higher than ever before. Luckily, there are bands like The Pale to meet the need. Over time, this four-piece from Bellingham, WA, has developed a professional sound that resonates, appealing to all ages and tastes.

Gabe, The Pale's 27-year-old lead singer/guitar/Rhodes piano player, took a few moments to answer some questions for us via e-mail.

SKRATCH: How long has The Pale's current line-up been playing together, and how did you all come together?

GABE: The current line-up has been playing together for just over a year. Cameron and I are cousins and have dreamed of playing music since we were little. His dad ran a studio when we were kids, and my dad was writing and recording his songs...so I guess it's in our blood. I met Greg and Lance at school here in Bellingham, and I'm sure music is in their blood, too—even though Greg's dad is an accountant and Lance's dad is a cop.

SKRATCH: I know that The Pale has become a well-known and regularly-heard name in the Seattle scene. What is the scene there like, and how do you feel The Pale fits into it as a band?

GABE: In a lot of ways, the Seattle indie-rock scene is pretty diverse. There's straight-ahead rock, melodic pop, brooding indie rock, and dance/pop. All the different styles share some common elements, and I think it's provided an open door for us to be of part of it all. We've been fortunate enough to become friends with a bunch

of cool bands in Seattle, which has been huge in terms of breaking into the scene. We've also been helped along by some key music folks in Seattle, like KEXP and 107.7 "The End," as well as the local music press.

SKRATCH: Compared to Seattle, what are some differences in other localities that you have seen when touring?

GABE: I don't know if we've done enough touring yet to have that kind of perspective. It seems like Seattle is just starting to catch up with California in terms of having a lot of all-ages venues, which is great. We all went to a ton of shows before we were 21, so our hope is always that our shows would be open to everybody. In Seattle, all-ages venues like the Vera Project, the Old Firehouse, and the Milkbar have been working really hard to give bands and underage concert-goers more options.

SKRATCH: Your upcoming release, GRAVITY GETS THINGS DONE, will be on your new label SideCho out of Southern California. Is it hard working with a company that is based so far away?

GABE: I guess it does put us out of the loop a bit, and day-to-day business stuff can prove difficult sometimes; but, overall, I don't think it's kept us from doing what we hope to do as a band. Ultimately, if a label and a band are both willing to work hard, they can take care of business regardless of their location.

SKRATCH: I can only imagine that you had other labels making you offers. Why did you sign with SideCho?

GABE: We were nervous to pursue options at bigger labels, because we felt that a really big step like that took too much of what we do out of our hands. In the end, we agreed that what we really

needed from a label was solid distribution and promotion. We found that in SideCho, but even more importantly what we got was a label that was excited about and believed in our music. That made us feel like SideCho wasn't taking us to the prom just because we were hot, but because they like-liked us, too.

SKRATCH: The album comes out on January 13, but it will not be the first time it has been released. Like your other albums, you released GRAVITY GETS THINGS DONE on your own. Why are you choosing to re-release this album instead of recording another for the label?

GABE: Even though GRAVITY... has been independently released for just over a year, the majority of people who have heard it are in the Seattle and Bellingham (our hometown area). Releasing it nationally on SideCho is the first chance for the rest of America to hear it. Having said that...I can't wait to record again.

SKRATCH: This will be your first time working with a record label. What kind of changes has this brought about for the band?

GABE: We've had to look hard at where we want to go as a band, which has helped solidify our hopes for where the next few years will take us. In practical terms, it means that our drummer Greg doesn't have to distribute the CDs from his '81 Honda Civic anymore.

SKRATCH: Does it feel different to be releasing an album through a label?

GABE: It feels great to have national distribution and promotion behind it. The opportunities for what we might be able to do as a band have opened up, and as a result there's a lot more at stake. The one thing that doesn't really change is that we still have to work really hard or we'll squander this chance. It's funny, because when



some people heard that we had signed, they immediately assumed that we were rich and that we'd be on MTV2 within the week, while others felt we had sold out to the man. The truth is that we're really grateful to take a small (relative to the giant that is the "music industry") but very credible step forward with SideCho.

SKRATCH: Along the way, the band has had the opportunity to play with such huge indie names like Pedro the Lion, Death Cab for Cutie, etc. You've also earned recognition, as well as reached top spots on radios in your area. When the band first started playing together, did you expect this amount of success? Was it your goal, or was it just a pleasant bonus?

GABE: We've definitely reached a level of success that I never really let myself hope for. The odds are almost always against you as a band. There are SO many amazing bands out there that no one has ever heard of, and I think it would be difficult for anyone to pinpoint why one band makes it and another one doesn't...so we're thankful for what we have, and we're definitely going to run with it and see what happens. Over the course of the last year, I've learned that it's really important to set your expectations high as a band. We played a parking lot/side stage at a festival here in Washington last May with the likes of The Flaming Lips, My Morning Jacket, Death Cab, and Coldplay, and afterwards my mom said, "I'm pretty sure you guys will play on the main stage next year." Well, of course she gets to say that, because she's my mom—but hey, why not?

SKRATCH: What is your focus/goal as a band?

GABE: I hope this doesn't sound clichéd...the most important thing to us is to make music that we're proud of. No

matter what success we'll be able to enjoy, it will all feel a bit pointless unless we've built it on solid and genuine—and, hopefully, inventive—music.

SKRATCH: What do the members of The Pale do in their spare time? What does a usual day in the life of a member look like?

GABE: Cameron runs a recording studio at our practice space (where we've recorded our last two CDs, including GRAVITY...) and has worked with a lot of talented bands. If he's not recording, he's either trying to rope us into playing Pinochle or downloading another version of "STAR WARS Kid." Greg is a waiter on a cruise boat based out of Seattle, but he spends most of his time running the day-to-day operations of the band and trying to convince the rest of us that most things are way cooler if they have wheels. Lance is the music director at a local college ministry and tells the funniest stories you've ever, ever heard. I'm a substitute teacher (and since I'm answering the questions here, I have the advantage of picking on the rest of the band).

SKRATCH: Finally, what does music mean to you? What role does it play in your life?

GABE: Music is communication...and hopefully it will play the role of a full-time paying job sometime soon.

Look out for GRAVITY GETS THINGS DONE in your local record stores, and make sure to pick up a copy. For now, satisfy your hunger for more Pale at their Website: www.thepalemusic.com.

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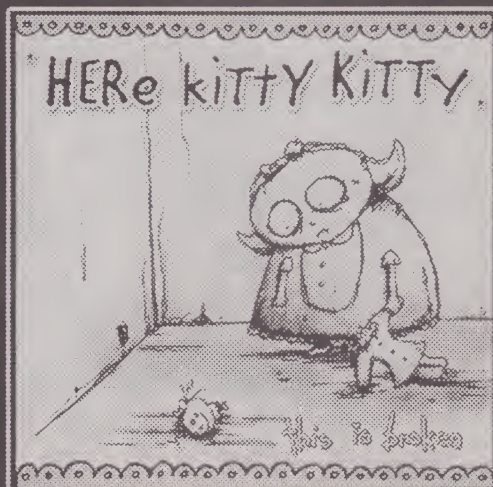
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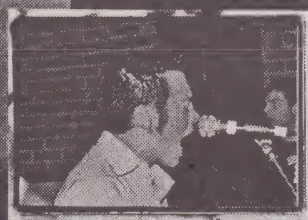
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Anadivine



ANADIVINE
By Janelle Jones



Anadivine—a four-piece out of Kingston, NY—have only been around for a short while and haven't even released a full-length yet, but already they have quite a buzz about them—and for good reason. Composing songs that feature a multitude of styles—from punk to hardcore to emo—these men are inventive and original. In fact, when listening to their self-titled debut EP on SideCho for the first time, one is left awed by the band's sheer passion and the unexpected elements present in each song. Anadivine—vocalist/guitarist Sean Paul, vocalist/bassist Mike, drummer Justin, and guitarist/vocalist Bill—are quite busy these days, finishing up writing material for their upcoming LP (which is slated for a summer release on the Militia Group) and playing as many shows as possible.

And still, Sean Paul found some time to discuss the band, the EP, and their much-anticipated full-length.

SKRATCH: First, I have to tell you I spoke with Warren of Digger, and all he had was praise for you guys. I don't know how many times he mentioned you guys, seriously.

SEAN PAUL: [Laughs] We had a good time with those guys. Yeah, it was really awesome. I

really praise Digger, too, because, you know, they've been doing it a long time. I think those guys are awesome.

SKRATCH: How many weeks were you out with them?

SEAN PAUL: I think it was four altogether, but it wasn't that far away, so we actually came home a lot, because we just got off a five-week tour with Hidden in Plain View and that really tired us out. And we have to write a new record and start recording it in February, so we're under a lot of stress right now to both like play and write this new record.

SKRATCH: Yeah, about the new record: do you have a lot of material written already?

SEAN PAUL: Yeah, it's probably 75-80% written, and we still have like another couple...like a month to finish it up, so we're in good shape.

SKRATCH: About the EP: some of the songs have ellipses. Are they connected in any way?

SEAN PAUL: I think. Do you mean the song titles?

SKRATCH: Yeah.

SEAN PAUL: Yeah, I think that I kind of wanted to [do that] because there were three instrumentals, and...I don't know—it was just weird for me. I just connected them together. I don't know. I just had this weird visual, because the rest of the record was so...I mean, it goes from, like, "Cross Your Heart" to "Filling the Lungs", which sound nothing alike, so I thought, like, at least I could band the names together, you know what I mean? I think 'cause the musical standpoint is on such different horizons that I kinda just wanted to make it feel more complete by just sticking them all together somehow.

SKRATCH: You brought up a good point. I mean, your sound is a mix of so many styles that I don't even know how to categorize you guys! Like you said, "Filling the Lungs", that's like skate punk almost, you know?

SEAN PAUL: Yeah. [...] I grew up listening to...Among other things, the main influence I really had was always The Descendents. To this day can't get enough of that band, so, you know, although on the next record there is no song like "Filling the Lungs", there's always a part of me that wanted to write a song like that. That's kinda what we do: we just write whatever we write because that's what comes out, which is cool. But sometimes we get a little slammed for that. [Laughs]

"...like playing and coming home and going to this dive bar and living in alcohol and oxygen, you know what I mean? It's like day and night drinking and breathing."

SEAN PAUL: Really?

SEAN PAUL: Well, I don't know. [...] You gotta let people who review CDs review CDs, but one comment [...] that got me annoyed one time was I read a review on us that said, "These guys can't seem to find their niche," which I thought was kind of hypocritical, because then a band will put out a record where every song sounds the same and they'll bash them for that. [...] It's a no-win situation.

SKRATCH: Right. I mean, I think the varying elements make it more exciting.

SEAN PAUL: That's totally what I believe. It's just [that] I get upset when people use the word "niche," and then in the next CD they review they say how everything sounds exactly the same, so you're like, "Okay."

SKRATCH: Is there any one song on the EP that stands out or means more to you personally?

SEAN PAUL: Hmmm. That's a hard one, because they all came from like a year in the life of Anadivine. Probably "Alcohol and Oxygen" means the most to me.

SKRATCH: You wanna give a reason?

SEAN PAUL: I think just because it really had to do with a big six-month chunk of my life where...Actually, Josh from Coheed [and Cambria] was some of the reason I wrote that song. It's funny, 'cause me and him (Coheed is from the same town) would go to this dive bar, and we'd spend most of our time there. It's just about like everything that happened over the course of six months, like playing and coming home and going to this dive bar and living in alcohol and oxygen, you know what I mean? It's like day and night drinking and breathing. That's kind of like what it's about.

SKRATCH: All right. How about the artwork?

SEAN PAUL: The artwork makes us look like a metal band.

SKRATCH: I actually saw a review mentioning that.

SEAN PAUL: The label had come up with that logo, and they showed it to us, and we were in love with it. We were like, "Oh, that's awesome, that's really cool." And then we kinda were just like, "You guys have a handle on what we're doing," and so they kind of just did a layout for us. I think we always try to push the extreme a little. That's kind of funny if you bought that because of the layout and you listen to like the last track or something. I'm not sure what people really think. [...] The layout—it's dark, it's cool, it gets some of the message across; but, I mean, we're not all about guns and knives. There's actually a little disclaimer on the record, if you saw it.

SKRATCH: No.

SEAN PAUL: Underneath the tray it says...Anna Divine, the real person, was a person who did education, and she was just a nice woman and stuff, and then her name's on a CD with guns and knives, so it says a little thing on there that the artwork does not depict the person who Anadivine was or her work. It could have been a little bigger. I guess SideCho didn't want to print that too big. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: That's funny you said you'd think it was a metal band. I saw another reviewer say something about thinking it would be goth.

SEAN PAUL: Oh yeah—it looks like we're one of those Scandinavian [...] metal bands or something like that. I think with the next

record the layout's gonna be more...I really don't know what anybody's gonna think of the next record. It's gonna be out there.

SKRATCH: You mean very different?

SEAN PAUL: Yeah. It's strange, but it's gonna be cool, it's gonna be awesome. It's got every element again...I think.

SKRATCH: What do you think is the reason all these bands have been coming out of Kingston?

SEAN PAUL: Something in the water. No—I don't know. But there's a lot more where we came from. I think that there's just a real wealth of talent here, like there's a lot of good bands. I mean Josh from Coheed's brother is in a band called Three. Coheed took them on tour. I think that band is amazing. There's a band around here called No Valentine. I think those guys are absolutely incredible, too. I mean, there's a lot. I don't know what it is. It's just that kids have a real passion for music around here.

SKRATCH: Yeah, it's almost...Well, I can't say for sure, but like it's almost how it is here on Long Island.

SEAN PAUL: Yeah, oh yeah, definitely. It's just that there's places where music really inspires. I mean, I THINK that's why. Even like around us in the next county over is Matchbook Romance and Autopilot Off and those bands, so right around this whole upstate NY Orange/Ulster County thing, we got a lot of stuff going on.

Check www.anadivine.com for updates and info.



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CRIME IN STEREO



Crime in Stereo
By Ryan Pangilinan

Long Island, NY, not only shares its name with an alcoholic drink, but it's also the current hotbed of rock music. It's hard to mention without listing bands. Crime in Stereo is the latest Long Island export. A mix of traditional punk and hardcore, CIS's debut full-length on Blackout/Brightside Records, **EXPLOSIVES AND THE WILL TO USE THEM**, is a sickeningly strong freshman album.

Recently, bassist Mike Musilli chatted with SKRATCH about his band, the scene, and whether or not Long Island is the new Seattle.

SKRATCH: How did you guys sign with Brightside/Blackout?

MIKE: It's a pretty weird story how we ended up on Brightside/Blackout. We had played a show on Long Island with the Hope Conspiracy and The Cro-Mags, and our guitarist Alex was hanging out after the show talking to John Joseph [The Cro-Mags' vocalist], and John had mentioned earlier that his roadie was looking for weed to smoke. Alex was like, "John, if you're serious, I'll help your boy out" or whatever. John was like, "If you guys want to open up our show at CBGB, you're more than welcome to." Opening up for The Cro-Mags at CBGB is like the Holy Grail of hardcore, so we jumped at it. So we played a show at CBs with The Cro-Mags, Ensign, The Hope Conspiracy, and No Warning. Tim Shaw from Ensign got there early and just happened to catch us. We didn't think anything of it, but on [Ensign's] Webpage he ended up shoutin' us out, so I get home, I e-mailed him and said, "Thanks for the props. We should do some shows," and he was like "Actually, I'm starting a label on Blackout Records, and I would love to do some stuff with you guys." So we sent him demos, and he was digging it; and at the same time all this was going on, Kill Your Idols was hookin' us up all over the place—taking us

out, going out every weekend, out of state, pretty much showing us the ropes. They had just bought back three songs from Revelation. They had been looking to help Bill Wilson out at Blackout Records, since [they] started out on Blackout. They were looking to give him something back, so they said, "Let's do these three songs with Crime in Stereo and do a split." And it just made sense, because Tim Shaw had been looking at us for [Brightside], Kill Your Idols was looking to help everybody else out, so everything just came together really quick. It was pretty crazy. I guess that's how the whole Blackout thing got rolling. It's been real fun. They're a good label and good people. We're pretty happy.

SKRATCH: That's a multiple hook-up story. You guys are from Long Island, which is being called the new Seattle—mostly because of the pop-punk scene, with bands like The Movielife. But before that Long Island was more known for the underground stuff like Vision of Disorder. Do you think that being from there will help since there's a resurgence right now?

MIKE: Yeah, it'll definitely help us, but there's no way in hell that Long Island is the new Seattle. Seriously, the Seattle underground scene compared to Long Island is very, very big. The publicity that Long Island gets as a whole is great, but all the pop-punk bands that get big in Long Island [which] don't hook everybody up, what the fuck to they have to do [with the scene]? It's crazy, because a lot of these [underground] bands have hardcore roots and didn't have a core section of pop-punk fans go to hardcore shows or hardcore kids to go pop-punk shows; but it's gotten diverse and opened up a lot. Glassjaw kinda got big, then Movielife broke, then Brand New broke, and all of a sudden everybody and their mother has a pop-punk band. It's a weird cycle, but I think it'll be great for everyone. Brand New was on Triple Crown, and now Scraps and Heart Attacks just got signed to Triple Crown. It's like family; it's a small world.

SKRATCH: That's pretty cool that it's that small, yet that big. I listened to your songs, and the first thing that popped up in my mind was, "Wow, they kind of sound like early H2O and Trial." It reminded me of when I was coming up, and there aren't many bands that sound like that. Any band that sounds "hardcore" usually has singing parts with screaming, like Finch—for as talented as they are, have bland formulas.

MIKE: Finch isn't a hardcore band; they're the best Glassjaw rip-off band.

SKRATCH: But that's all these kids are exposed to. Listening to your band, you can tell that you're rooted in old-school hardcore. Who are your influences?

MIKE: It's kinda cool that, as far as the band goes, we have a lot of similar interests. Me and Alex came up in the scene together, so a lot of our influences are the same. Lyrically speaking, Joe Strummer is an influence, Tommy from Silent Majority is an influence. These are the people that we could relate to, and they're intelligent and not pretentious. Musically speaking, Bad Religion, all the New York City bands: The Cro-Mags... War Zone was a big influence on us.... It's funny that you asked that question, because I just did a radio show out here with a couple friends, and the whole idea for the radio show is to [play] our most influential records. We were spinning everything from The Misfits to The Cro-Mags to Rancid, to Circle Jerks—it's just across the board. Kids today don't do their homework when it comes to hardcore. They'll hear the bands they like, and that's it. They'll hear Poison the Well, but they won't think about the bands that influenced [them]. They don't think about the music; they don't care. And then you see these (not to label them) new-school-type kids, these Drive Thru kids, who are like, "You know what? I don't want to do that." I think it's unfortunate that they listen to these bands. Everyone's entitled to listen to whatever they want, but all these kids that listen to

“...WE'RE NOT GOING TO BE FOOLISH, AND WE'RE NOT GOING TO TURN OUR BACKS ON THE SCENE.”

all we're trying to do is open up the mind of every pop-punk, mallrat kid. If we could get 10 kids to go to the Website, to read the lyrics, to listen to the demos, [we could] steer them in the right direction. It's like you said, man: these kids are fooled. Look at Trustkill. Trustkill went to shit. They came out with a bunch of hardcore bands, then one band, Poison the Well...they get huge, they sign to a major. All of a sudden the major is impressed by the independents. Of course the dollar signs messed [everything] up. Now the guy's churning out shit, the guy's label is nothing, crap. They have one good band, Most Precious Blood, and that's it. Look at Victory Records. The first 30 or 40 Victory records are some of the most crucial hardcore records. They did all the early Earth Crisis, Strife—that is crucial hardcore. And now what do they do? Count the fucking Stars? It's a real dollar-sign industry, and it's almost a shame.

New Found Glory or Taking Back Sunday...How many of them do you think listens to Dag Nasty? or a band like The Grace, who is just as melodic, just as appealing—but who were doing this 15 years ago? They don't even care about that.

SKRATCH: How far do you want to take your band?

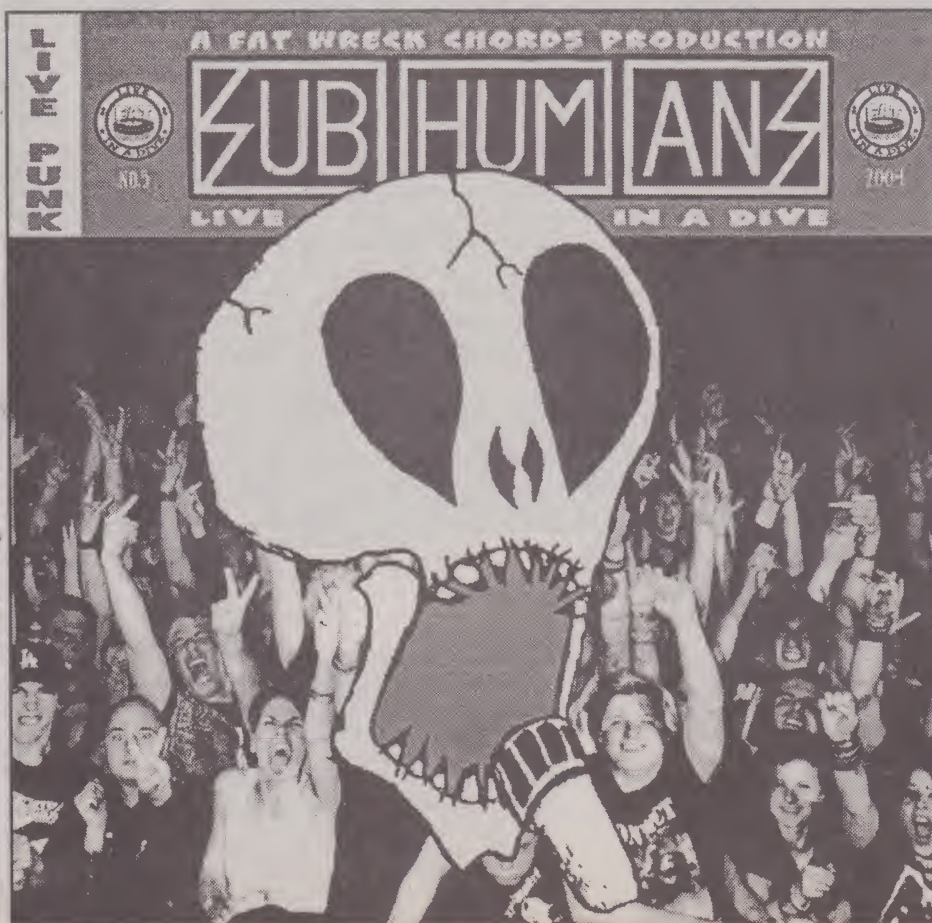
MIKE: We'll take the band as far as we possibly can, you know? But we're not going to be foolish, and we're not going to turn our backs on the scene.

SKRATCH: I can understand how frustrating it can be. You talk about a band like Dag Nasty is influential to bands like New Found Glory, but you could even go a few years ago when Lifetime came out with JERSEY'S BEST DANCERS, which is one of the best albums—and there are kids today who don't know that album even exists.

MIKE: I remember when Saves the Day first came out. All I could think of was, "Lifetime—there it is." It's like their fans didn't give a shit where that style came from. Even The Get Up Kids were out doing their thing before anybody else, and all these newer bands bastardize that style.

SKRATCH: Labels are doing a disservice, in that they keep churning out these emo bands that sound the same. Kids are going to get into these bands, but they're going to ignore the local bands. The kids who want to start something and make a difference are going to suffer in the long run.

MIKE: Yeah, no doubt about it. We played a couple shows with big bands from that pop-punk scene. When we're up there,



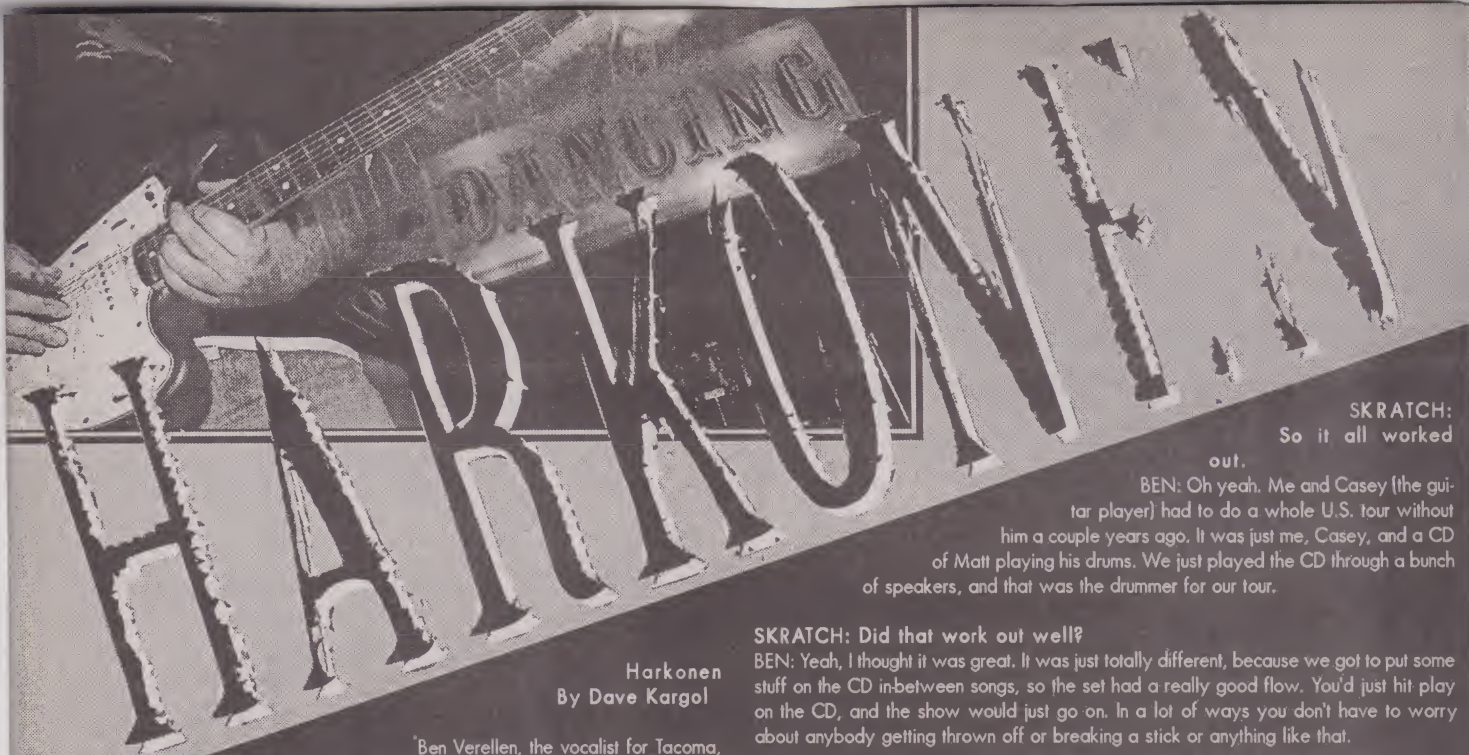
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Harkonen
By Dave Kargol

Ben Verellen, the vocalist for Tacoma, WA, art-metal cavaliers Harkonen, has a soft voice that sounds very much like the antithesis of his band's music. The calm tone he speaks in stands distinctly apart from the technical crunch of the average Harkonen song, which will typically brandish raw, voiceover-like vocals and ambient, pseudo-prog guitar lines like their lives depend on it. Although these songs differ from the math-oriented chaos of bands such as The Dillinger Escape Plan and Converge, they're every part as complex, ingenious, and heavy. Go purchase 2002's Hydra Head full-length SHAKE HARDER BOY, raise your stereo's volume a notch beyond your usual preferred threshold, and get back to us after removing the shattered remains of each and every frame that once adorned your walls. Harkonen's ingenuity and vigor blends them into the fold along with the remainder of the Seattle scene's other highly-respected acts (many of whom the band are extremely close to).

Ben, who also plays in Roy (Fueled By Ramen) with his brother Dave Verellen (who handled vocals in the legendary Botch), shared his thoughts on Harkonen's freshest EP and the band's ever-increasing need for a real Website.

SKRATCH: I never received a bio for Harkonen, and it appears as though your Website hasn't been updated since the late '90s. Please bear with me.

BEN: The Website is disgustingly outdated. Our buddy Tim (who used to play drums for Botch) did that for us a few years back. He kind of dropped off the face of the earth, so it just kind of totally got neglected. None of us in the band really care that much about Internet stuff; but apparently that's how everyone gets their information about bands these days. [Laughs] We're probably kind of suffering for it.

SKRATCH: Is there a story behind the band's name?

BEN: Harkonen is really a bad name for a band. The only reason we're called Harkonen is because when we decided to start playing shows and got a bunch of people together in the band, the guy who was playing guitar at the time was a huge science-fiction guy. And he had some book all about that movie DUNE, and the word was just in there and he thought it sounded kind of cool. That's basically all the explanation I can offer.

SKRATCH: It seems like a handful of the bands from your area, such as Minus the Bear, These Arms Are Snakes, Roy, and Botch (R.I.P.), are all part of a really tight-knit group.

BEN: Yeah. We all kind of went to the same shows in Seattle growing up and are into a lot of the same stuff. [It's] like 20 or 30 people. It's disgustingly incestuous, really. Everybody's in a bunch of bands, and we're all buddies.

SKRATCH: So your drummer hurt himself a while back?

BEN: I guess it originally started about 1999. He broke his arm doing something or other, and it just got worse and worse. He kept playing drums on it, and he eventually had to just kind of stick his whole arm in this crazy cocoon thing for about half a year—so he was kind of out of commission. When he was all healed up, he started playing again.

SKRATCH:
So it all worked out.

BEN: Oh yeah. Me and Casey (the guitar player) had to do a whole U.S. tour without him a couple years ago. It was just me, Casey, and a CD of Matt playing his drums. We just played the CD through a bunch of speakers, and that was the drummer for our tour.

SKRATCH: Did that work out well?

BEN: Yeah, I thought it was great. It was just totally different, because we got to put some stuff on the CD in-between songs, so the set had a really good flow. You'd just hit play on the CD, and the show would just go on. In a lot of ways you don't have to worry about anybody getting thrown off or breaking a stick or anything like that.

SKRATCH: Your new EP is being released by Initial Records, but most of your other releases are on Hydra Head. Why did you make the switch?

BEN: We're not on any label; we're not on Initial. Hydra Head puts out our records, and we're totally, totally in love with that label. We're just really good friends with a couple of the guys at Initial. They wanted us to do an EP, so we did one, but the next record will be on Hydra Head, and the record after that will be, too.

SKRATCH: What was it like working with producer/engineer/Minus the Bear member Matt Bayles (who has also worked with The Blood Brothers, Isis and Deftones) for the SHAKE HARDER BOY album?

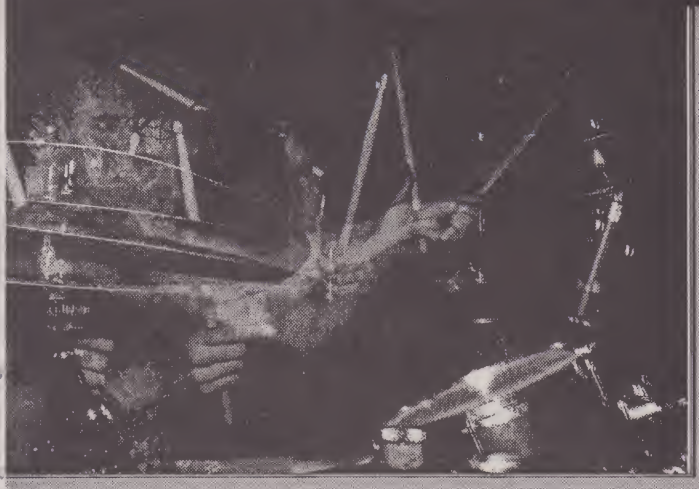
BEN: He's awesome. He's great.

SKRATCH: Do you typically try to focus on any particular themes within your songs?

BEN: They're usually nothing too deep or important, to tell you the truth. [Laughs] I mean, the songs are all about stuff that's important to me, because I write most of the lyrics for the band. I can't really say that most people will be able to find a lot of deep meaning within the songs. Most of them are just kind of about confusion, basically. I can't really specify too much besides that, because a lot of them are just off the top of my head. You couldn't pick out a line and have me explain what it's all about.

SKRATCH: You know how you'll be reading reviews and you'll see one of these wild analogies that are used to describe someone's music, like "they sound like John Denver and The Locust fighting over a chocolate doughnut on wet AstroTurf?" Can you come up with one of those to





describe your band?

BEN: [Laughs] You want me to come up some terrible review for Harkonen?

SKRATCH: Yes.

BEN: Off the top of my head, right now? [Laughs] I have a really good one, but I can't take credit for it. Casey, our guitar player, came up with this: Harkonen is like having sex with a hobo: good and sloppy.

SKRATCH: You guys need to print that onto some stickers and put them on your releases.

BEN: We might.

SKRATCH: Who does your artwork?

BEN: It's different. Aaron Turner did the stuff for the last full-length, SHAKE HARDER BOY. Dave Knudson (who plays guitar in Minus the Bear and used to be in Botch) did the artwork for "The Grizz". He's a really good graphic designer. Ryan Patterson (who works

at Initial and is also in the band Black Cross) did the artwork for our latest, the EP on Initial. We don't stick to a very consistent art vision; we just kind of do whatever feels appropriate for the project.

SKRATCH: Is SHAKE HARDER BOY a reference to THE SIMPSONS?

BEN: It is, but very indirectly. It really has nothing to do with that, but that's probably where it got said first. It somehow made its way into our conversation and ended up somehow fitting what the record was about, sort of. But I guess you're right to trace it back to that.

SKRATCH: Roy's new album also just came out. How are you going to be dividing your time between your two bands?

BEN: More touring with Roy and more recording and writing with Harkonen. Each band is in a different kind of phase.

SKRATCH: Is it difficult splitting up your attention between two bands?

BEN: It's actually pretty easy, because Roy is kind of the more active of the two bands and two of Harkonen's other guys, for the time being, are really serious about school. Harkonen tours when we can. Roy is more of the touring band, I guess you could say. But it's not really an issue. Harkonen had a pretty busy year, even considering the stuff that Roy has done. We released a couple records this year, and we did a couple tours, and we've been playing a lot locally. In the midst of all that, Roy has had a couple records released, as well. We're able to balance it pretty well, I think.

SKRATCH: I heard that your brother Dave (who plays drums in Roy) can't tour with the band. How come?

BEN: He's a firefighter, so he can't tour. When we tour with Roy, we take a touring drummer. We had Joe from These Arms Are Snakes on the last tour, and we'll have this other fella coming on the next trip.

SKRATCH: What have you been listening to as of late?

BEN: Oh, man, I listen to a lot of Guided by Voices, The Jesus Lizard, Unwound...all kinds of stuff.

Harkonen is planning to release a split EP with These Arms Are Snakes on Hydra Head Industries this April.

"Harkonen is like having sex with a hobo: good and sloppy."

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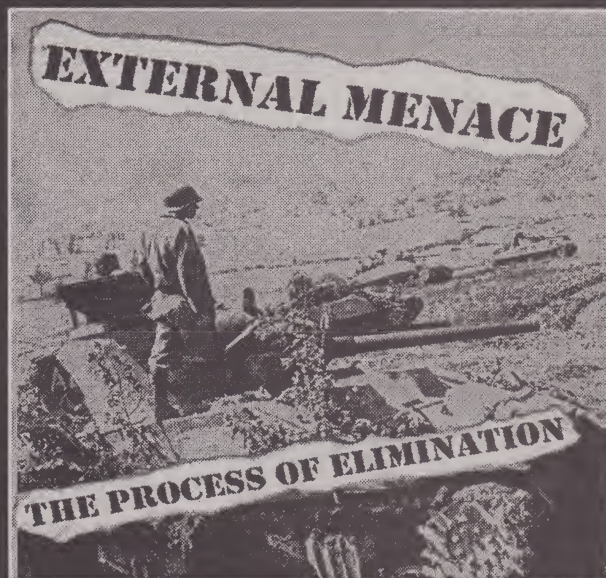
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Black Cross
Interview by Ryan Pangilinan
Photo by James Case

Ferocious punk rock is hard to come by these days. Anything with a guitar, spiky-haired "musicians," and studded bracelets passes off as punk in today's world, where any jock or teeny bopper can walk into a Hot Topic and come out a rebel. For the Louisville, KY, quartet Black Cross, being punk is much more than playing superficial tunes about girls and wearing Macbeth shoes. Their album **ART OFFENSIVE** (Equal Vision) is a sonic blast of raw guitars and equally raw vocals. Produced by the legendary J. Robbins, **OFFENSIVE** recalls the fierce sounds popularized by bands such as Fugazi, Bad Brains, and Black Flag.

SKRATCH spoke to Black Cross' six-string samurai and Initial Records' label manager Ryan Patterson about pumping up today's wussy version of rock 'n' roll with a little something called...well, rock 'n' roll.

SKRATCH: So how did Black Cross form?

RYAN: Well, the long and short of it is that we all kind of ended up in the same place at the same time. Our bass player (Even Patterson) is my brother. Rob [Pennington, vocals] moved back in 2001 from Colorado. I wanted to play in a hardcore-oriented band, and we talked about it. There's a million details, but that's the gist of it.

SKRATCH: There's been a lot of comparisons between your band and Black Flag.

RYAN: The Black Flag thing [happened] because people compared us to Black Flag. I love them, but they were never one of those bands we wanted to rip off; but once we played shows and put out records, people compared us to them. As far as having an influence from old punk

and hardcore, that's what we're into.

SKRATCH: But what's hardcore now isn't what was hardcore back then.

RYAN: We have friends in those "new hardcore" bands, but I got into punk rock when I was a kid—stuff on Dischord and S.S.T. There's also stuff from the late '80s like Fugazi and Drive Like Jehu. I don't think I've ever influenced by what was out at the time. I couldn't imagine starting a band because of what's out at the time. It was who we are. Originally, we started out as a straightforward hardcore band.

SKRATCH: You have a pretty good sense of ideals and sticking to your beliefs as opposed to following trends. Do you apply that when signing new bands to Initial?

RYAN: It's not entirely my decision. We put out bands if it's something we can agree on. I hope I'm not releasing music that's typical of what's going on.

SKRATCH: You signed Blue Sky Mile, and they're derivative of the Midwestern indie-rock boom of the late 1990s.

RYAN: Blue Sky Mile is an interesting band. I sat down and listened to [their demo], and I guess they're in the "emo" genre. I loved The Get Up Kids and Promise Ring. I listened to [Blue Sky Mile] a lot. It took a long time, but the vibe of the band is cool. To me, I hear elements of Dag Nasty. Hopefully, a kid who likes Brand New, Thursday, and Thrice would like Blue Sky Mile.

SKRATCH: Since you work at Initial, why did you decide to go with Equal Vision to release your full-length, ART OFFENSIVE?

RYAN: When we started Black Cross/Black Widows [their original moniker], Andy [Initial's owner] really wanted to put it out, but I felt weird about it. It's like we didn't have to work at it. We did the first EP, then Equal Vision got interested, so we went there. [It avoids] conflict of interest. But Initial put out our vinyl and 7". Black Cross is on Equal Vision, but Initial is home. It's an honor that anyone would put out something that I've done. It's fucking awesome.

SKRATCH: Is there a meaning behind the album's title?

RYAN: It's a song on the record. To me, it's about the need to create art, the need to use your voice. It's the ultimate point, having a desire. The idea is to champion that.

SKRATCH: With the popularity of bands like Black Cross and Christiansen, do you think that people will be looking to Kentucky as they've been looking at Long Island or Southern California as hotbeds in the music scene?

RYAN: I don't feel that way. Christiansen is doing well, but My Morning

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thing. But for us and our brother bands, we don't look at that. Everything [here] is D.I.Y. and punk rock. From my perspective, there's no feeding frenzy. But there are good bands here. I feel that all-ages shows are building up and getting bigger. You need flagship bands to move things, and things are getting bigger here.

SKRATCH: What are your touring plans right now?

RYAN: Right now our bass player, Even, is in Breathe to Resist, and Rob is getting married, so we aren't touring. But in the summer we'll go out to Europe, then we'll go back to the U.S. and the West. We do it when we can.

SKRATCH: Who are you touring with in Europe?

RYAN: It's us and Modern Life Is War. They're a good hardcore band from Iowa. It'll be good. I'm pretty psyched about that.

SKRATCH: Do you have any goals for Black Cross?

RYAN: Just to stick around for a while. I hope this band sticks it out for years. We recorded with J. Robbins, [and] I'm proud of it. From day one we've been lucky. There's never a specific success. I just want to be in a good band. Pretty simple—no major agenda.

SKRATCH: That's a good attitude to have. There are so many independent labels that operate like a major: they just create bands who want to be mainstream and who aren't creative, because it brings fame and notoriety faster than creating art.

RYAN: We just take our cues from different bands like Fugazi and Neurosis; they carved their own path. We go for different things. If you keep it simple, it's easier and you cut out a lot of the bullshit. We do what we do: be ourselves.

SKRATCH: Earlier, you mentioned working with J. Robbins. He's done some pretty incredible records: Promise Ring's entire catalog, The Dismemberment Plan, etc. What was that experience like?

RYAN: Well, Even and I wanted to record with him. I have so many records he's done. We knew he did a good job. I have no complaints. He believed in the band. We're going to record the next one with him. I hope we always record with him. It's a more personal thing. What he's paid is completely reasonable. It's like hanging out with your friend. He was a part of our band and our album. That record's going to exist for my whole life, and it was amazing.

"It's an honor that anyone would put out something that I've done. It's fucking awesome."

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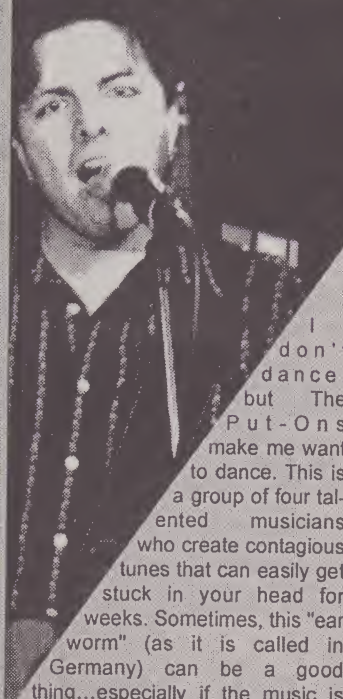
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THE PUT-ONS

By Marcus Solomon



I don't dance, but The Put-Ons make me want to dance. This is a group of four talented musicians who create contagious tunes that can easily get stuck in your head for weeks. Sometimes, this "ear worm" (as it is called in Germany) can be a good thing...especially if the music is enjoyable. While listening to The Put-Ons, you will be reminded a bit of The Cars, The Clash, and Buzzcocks. If you continue to listen, you will also discover deeper levels within the music and lyrical content. The songs are primarily upbeat, even when the subject matter is dour or sarcastic. Band leader David Pedroza is a gifted individual with the ability to simultaneously sneer, smile, and sing. He has taken primary rock 'n' roll and given it a bit of a twist and polish. This is the kind of stuff that makes you sing in the shower and makes starting the day an enjoyable experience.

The Put-Ons are:
David Pedroza—lead guitar/vocals
Gnat: rhythm—guitar
Shawn Munoz—bass
Mike Petrus—drums

SKRATCH: Adri of The Voids gave me your CD, and the kids were asking me who it was.
DAVE: Wow, cool.

SKRATCH: I wrote a review. I think it was in SKRATCH, but I'm not sure.
DAVE: Okay, I'll keep an eye out for it.

SKRATCH: Is there any meaning behind the band name?
DAVE: Shawn came up with the name. He had this Germs LP, and it had a mail-order thing to buy a "put-on"—you iron it on—of a Germs logo.

SKRATCH: So they called it a "put-on" instead of an "iron-on"?
DAVE: Yeah. That's where we got the name, and it stuck. That was about

three years ago, and we have two new releases. GET YOUR KICKS will be out...when?
GNAT: December.
DAVE: That's a 7" single.

SKRATCH: On the Puke 'n' Vomit label?
DAVE: It's on there and on Manic Records. Now, our current 7" is JACK KEVORKIAN GIFT CERTIFICATE.

SKRATCH: I love that one.
DAVE: Thanks. Did you get a copy?

SKRATCH: No, I just have the SEVEN AND SEVEN split CD.
DAVE: We have a limited edition on clear vinyl. It's already getting good reviews in MAXIMUM ROCK AND ROLL MAGAZINE and a couple of 'zines in Germany.

SKRATCH: Sprechen zie Deutsch?
DAVE: No, they leave it in English. The Germans are pretty good at it. Most Germans speak and read English.

SKRATCH: So, what brings you here to this backyard party?
DAVE: I came to check out Threatning Verse and The Voids.

SKRATCH: I came specifically for The Voids. And you play what?
DAVE: I sing and play the guitar.

SKRATCH: Do you write the lyrics, as well?
DAVE: I write most of the lyrics—
GNAT: And the music.

SKRATCH: Is punk rock paying the bills?
DAVE: Punk rock is barely paying the bills...not really.

SKRATCH: Really! But I wouldn't consider The Put-Ons punk rock. You're very straightforward rock 'n' roll.
DAVE: It's kind of rock 'n' roll, but when I went to high school, our group listened to punk rock—The Sex Pistols, Circle Jerks, X, Fear, and Black Flag. I guess that's punk rock, right?

SKRATCH: Last time I checked.
DAVE: Well, some of those guys call THAT rock 'n' roll.

SKRATCH: It's all relative. It's a dog of another color. How did you find the Puke 'n' Vomit label?
DAVE: Our first release was on Unit Squad Records, and then we put our own full-length on Manic Records—our own label. We [then] played a show at...
GNAT: The Showcase Theatre in Corona.
DAVE: ...With the Neon Maniacs.

NEARBY GIRL: Oh, I have to peel! Where am I going to go?

SKRATCH: Go over here. We won't look.
DAVE: Right over here! [Laughs]

SKRATCH: Is your hat waterproof?
GNAT: I don't know. I haven't tried it yet.
GIRL: [Giggles; walks away]

SKRATCH: Oh, well. Anyway, you met Gnat at the Showcase.
DAVE: Yes, and he said, "I want to put out a record." I said, "Okay." Pretty much the next week or so we were working on it, and it happened.

SKRATCH: And there ya go.
DAVE: It took about a year.

SKRATCH: No, it didn't.
DAVE: No, it took about six months.

SKRATCH: If you get something done in six months, it's still quite an accomplishment. As long as it doesn't take forever. You know, like those damn Voids. How long did it take that band to get a full-length together? And it's taking even longer for the band to get paid. I doubt that Black Noise label will ever pay them. No big deal—Dr. Strange Records will be taking care of The Voids very soon. Isn't it cool to be at a backyard party with a bunch of drunken kids?
DAVE: Yeah, and no cops.

SKRATCH: That's the weird thing.
DAVE: It's totally like when I was a kid.

SKRATCH: What city is this that allows this?
DAVE: This is a really cool city, because if this were Huntington Beach (where I live), the cops would have been here a long time ago. They would have pulled up when people were loading equipment.

SKRATCH: I think we are in Azusa or something.
DAVE: Where are we?
GNAT: La Puente.
DAVE: It is a backyard party. There's dust, a lawnmower, a trash can...

SKRATCH: There's a little garden altar over there. There's Catholic stuff everywhere.
GNAT: Oh, The Put-Ons are going to be playing at a high school.
DAVE: We are doing the high-school circuit, and our first gig on that stint is November 7 at Santiago High School in Garden Grove.

SKRATCH: Is it some kind of assembly thing and they are going to let the band play?
DAVE: No, we are playing right in the quad at lunchtime. It's a free concert.

SKRATCH: Have you seen the movie SCHOOL OF ROCK yet?
DAVE: No.

SKRATCH: You have to, all the way through. It's really good. It was a

movie where I did not want to go to the bathroom. I thought I would miss something.
DAVE: Oh, really?

SKRATCH: Yeah, it's that good. I did leave to use the restroom, though.
CATHY: All you had to do was open the door and let it go. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: It was at the drive-in. You're playing at a high school reminds me of that.
DAVE: I saw the previews for that movie.

SKRATCH: It's hilarious. And the kids actually play their instruments.
DAVE: Cool. Yeah, he was teaching them to make rock moves and faces and stuff.

SKRATCH: But the points he is making are legitimate: to stop being conditioned and let yourself explore, to be an artist, be exuberant, and basically discover your own soul.
DAVE: In your rock 'n' roll self.

SKRATCH: Do you think you have found that?
DAVE: Yes, I think I have.

SKRATCH: Was it an epiphany for you?
DAVE: It was an epiphany, and I decided I wanted to be a rock-guy.

SKRATCH: A rock-guy. What do you do otherwise?
DAVE: Graphic-design guy. I actually used to do layouts for SKRATCH MAGAZINE. I also write for OX FANZINE in Germany. I just interviewed The Skulls. That came out in October.

SKRATCH: What's the link?
DAVE: It's www.oxfanzine.de. "de" stands for Deutschland (i.e., Germany). I write a column called "The Orange Curtain." It's all about the Orange County underground music scene.

SKRATCH: One thing leads to another. What else have we not touched on? Is the band touring, or are you home-bound?
DAVE: We are home-bound. We are focusing on Southern California, but we are also going to do a couple of little tours up north. We might even go to Europe.

SKRATCH: Are you getting the money together to do this?
DAVE: Yes. We are getting it together. [We have to] get some sales going so that there will be some people at the shows. We are also working on a full-length release.

SKRATCH: Will this be on CD and LP?
DAVE: Yeah, CD and LP. I guess that's about it—for the important stuff, anyway.

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PREMONITIONS OF WAR

PREMONITIONS OF WAR

By Janelle Jones

Despite the fact that most of the guys of Premonitions of War were sick, vocalist Brad (who was recuperating from the bug himself) spoke with me over the phone during the San Antonio stop of their longest tour to date. Brad, who has been on-board one year, divulged some details about the War, their sound, and their incredible debut full-length on Victory, the menacing masterpiece **LEFT IN KOWLOON**, a seamless fusion of metal, grind, thrash, and hardcore.

SKRATCH: Heather at Victory mentioned Tijuana. Did something crazy happen there?

BRAD: It wasn't as crazy as we expected. I think a lot of bands hyped it up a bit, 'cause when we were going over we were kinda stressed out about it, because it was like, "Behave yourselves, don't jaywalk 'cause you'll get thrown in dog cages" and whatever; but it wasn't really anything like that at all; it was pretty calm. We had a pretty good time. There were a lot of kids there. They were really happy we came down.

SKRATCH: You have a new bassist?

BRAD: Yeah. Just before this tour we had Adam from The Red Chord come out, and he joined on bass permanently. We've been really good friends with Adam before because we've done two tours with The Red Chord and did a couple of weekends with his other band, Beyond the Sixth Seal, so Adam was definitely the logical choice for us.

SKRATCH: You didn't try out anyone else?

BRAD: No, we didn't try anybody out else at all. We basically just made sure that Adam wanted to do it, and we just asked him to join. And he came down and knew the songs right away. [He's] definitely very professional. It's been excellent so far.

SKRATCH: Just from reviewers and everything, you guys must hear all kinds of different categorizations. How do you personally describe your sound?

BRAD: Abrasive and condensed. Basically, when it comes to our sound, what we look to do is like...Since we're all into a huge amalgamation of music, we basically look to incorporate anything that we like into our playing style—but just cut out all the unnecessary stuff and condense it down into the most, like, dense formula we can get a hold of.

SKRATCH: Do you think that has anything to do with the shortness of most of the songs?

BRAD: [Laughs] Yeah, definitely. It's kind of like, once we've accomplished where we're trying to go with a song, there's no real reason to stretch it out or anything like that—so all the songs are gonna be pretty short and packed in.

SKRATCH: What was the writing process like for your first full-length?

BRAD: It was interesting. Basically, we had a lot of ideas, and [...] we tend to hammer things out pretty quickly. [...] We had a lot of stuff going on, so we had a really short amount of time in which to write the record, so I think that kind of helped us out a little bit, because we tend to work pretty well under pressure. It was a long few weeks of really concentrated writing and playing and rewriting and cutting things out. And it was basically just trying to refine everything and get it exactly how we wanted it to sound, [while] at the same time kind of experimenting with things we hadn't done

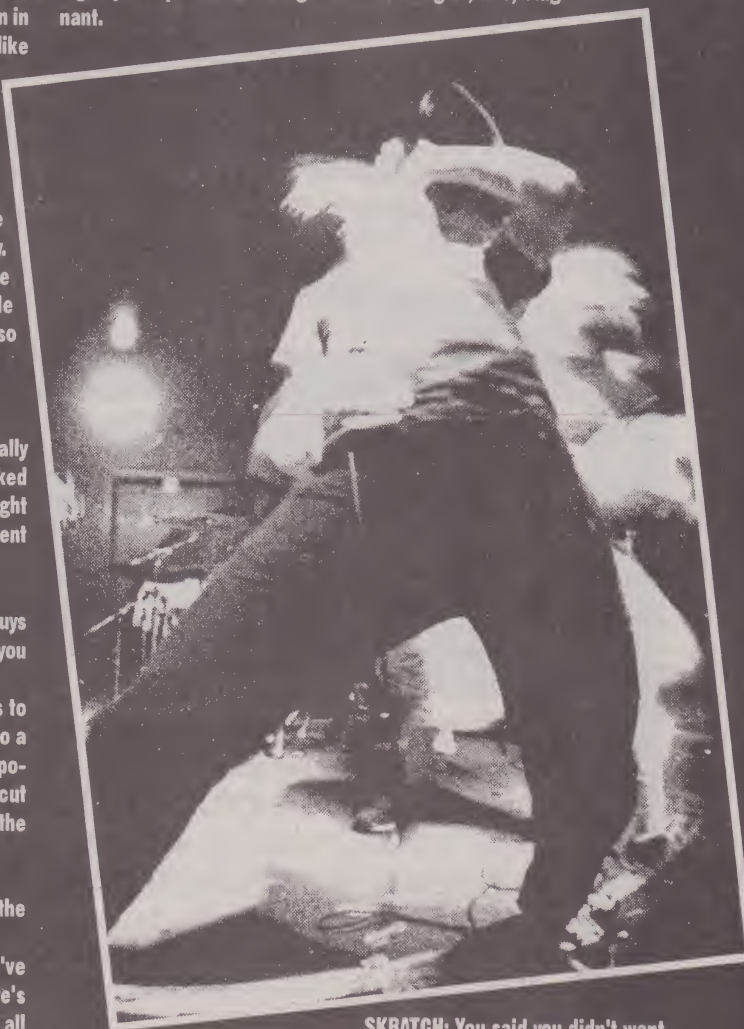
before. So it was pretty rewarding as a whole.

SKRATCH: Can you talk about "Black Den"?

BRAD: As far as lyrics go?

SKRATCH: The whole song, because to me it's the standout track—I guess just because it's so different.

BRAD: Well, I think [...] that song is another instance where while writing our full-length, there were a few things we hadn't really gotten into before that we wanted to try and experiment with. [...] You know, most of our songs are a minute-and-a-half or under, so we tried...A lot of us listen to a lot of really slow, heavy music, and we wanted to really try to combine elements of that kind of music in with the faster stuff we had done before. So the song pretty much starts out kind of manic and nervous, but at the same time becomes drawn out towards the end, and we just wanted to see if we could write a longer song without having any one part of the song become boring or, like, stagnant.



SKRATCH: You said you didn't want anything too...What'd you say: "boring"? I don't find that, but still, the slow, sludgy part keeps going on for minutes—but it's drawn out in a good way.

BRAD: Yeah, but also as far as that song goes, it's like, as far as the entire record just being smash, crush, and destroy the whole way through, we wanted to kinda like, while retaining heaviness and abrasiveness, at the same time we wanted to not metal it out but slow it down a little bit yet still have it be as oppressive as the rest of the record—just kind of give people a minute to like collect their thoughts if they listen to the record from beginning to end, have them kind of have that piece, and then also that longer piece that's right next to it to kind of tie the record together in the middle.

SKRATCH: And how about "Cables Hum Overhead"? What's the idea

behind that?

BRAD: Basically, it still follows in the same idea as "Black Den", but it's just taken up a different way. If you listen to *THE TRUE FACE OF PANIC EP*, there's some electronica breaks in-between songs. Pat programs, 'cause Pat's really into a lot of the electronica. He spends quite a bit of time on his own programming and composing stuff like that, so Pat and I kind of got together and worked that song out. We wanted to try like we use a drum machine in that song, and then Pat has distorted guitar and there's a bunch of other...Like, Pat and I had collected samples from certain places and, like, pitch-shifted them and stretched them out and stuff like that. It was just something else we wanted to experiment with to see if we could

work it into the record as a whole.

"Behave yourselves, don't jaywalk 'cause you'll get thrown in dog cages"

very inspirational to me, personally.

SKRATCH: Do you feel your sound has changed or progressed from record to record?

BRAD: Oh yeah, definitely. I think that, as far as the sound of the whole record, like, the slow parts are a lot slower, [...] not necessarily drawn out, but they're just a lot heavier. There's a lot more blasting on the record—like, it's just our sound that we've developed taken up one more notch. I think in pretty much every respect [there's] definitely a progression.

SKRATCH: I saw that you're working on material for a couple of splits.

BRAD: Yes, we have three splits in the works right now: we have a split 7" on *Happy Couples Never Last Records* that's gonna be with *The Dream Is Dead*, we also have a split 7" with *The Red Chord* coming out on *Relapse*, and we're doing a split CD with *Benum* on *Thorp Records*.

SKRATCH: Personally, is there any particular band or record that got you into hardcore or thrash or whatever?

BRAD: I've had kind of a weird progression of music that I listen to. I think as far as punk and hardcore goes, the first punk record I ever heard was *Black Flag's EVERYTHING WENT BLACK*, and I've kind of been hooked ever since—[and] that was when I was pretty young. And it's just progressed differently. *Black Flag* has laid a pretty good groundwork for my punk music taste. As far as metal goes, like, when I was younger, I was definitely into *Metallica* and *Slayer*, but that progressed into heavier stuff like *Carcass*, *Repulsion*, *Napalm Death*, stuff like that. The early grind scene is

SKRATCH: If you weren't in the band, what do you think you'd be doing?

BRAD: Probably the same thing I was doing beforehand: I was going to school here and there—not really a full-time student—and just working...and hanging out. It's not really all that exciting, but that is definitely probably what I would be doing.

SKRATCH: So you're better off this way, I guess.

BRAD: [Laughs] Oh, by far, by far and away.

The War have a hellish touring schedule prepared for 2004. After this tour ends mid-March, they'll be out again in April along with *Morbid Angel*.

Check premonitionsofwar.com for details...and pick up *LEFT IN KOWLOON* if you know what's good for you.



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METAPHOR IS AUDIO

METAPHOR IS AUDIO

Interview by Annette Ovanessian

Having been through many different line-up changes, Metaphor Is Audio can finally end their search. This young and talented band work together as if they've known each other for many years. For having known each other for only two months, they've created such a bond of respect and professionalism that their new five-song demo is a masterpiece. I was drawn to their music from listening to just the first few bars of the first song, and every song that followed made the same impact. Lead singer Davey has a clear and strikingly beautiful voice. Musically soft and smooth yet heart-pounding, this album is the shit!

Representing styles of indie/emo music, they have no choice but to tell us stories of how love and life have treated them wrong, yet they still manage to portray a love for life. I know one day the radio stations will be playing their songs. Until that day arrives, let's enjoy Metaphor Is Audio and support them live!

SKRATCH: Prior to this interview, a couple members of Metaphor Is Audio fell victim to the Southern California's massive fires. What happened?

DAVEY: Quite a few of our friends' homes burnt down. Dave and I both live in Lake Arrowhead, so it really took its toll on us for those two weeks. We had nowhere to live. We pretty much wandered for the two weeks we were evacuated. Fortunately, none of our homes burnt down.

SKRATCH: To me, your music clearly targets the alternative pop culture. Is this your main target and highest goal?

DAVEY: Our highest goal is just writing good, solid songs that we enjoy and people can relate

to. We just like to have fun entertaining people at our shows.

SKRATCH: The band name is in a sense a poetic smash of words. Would you say that it symbolizes that music is a description of something that is metaphorical?

DAVEY: We actually don't like that name anymore, because when we are asked what it means, it hurts our heads and we have no reply.

SKRATCH: Characterizing your sound would be fairly easy. Emo, indie, and melodic are three characteristics in my mind. Do you guys have three descriptions of your own?

DAVEY: Hmmm.... Angry, catchy, and simple.

SKRATCH: I could be wrong, but is there a different type of microphone that you guys use to record the vocals with?

BOBBY: Yes, it is a very special microphone! It is similar to the one used by the legendary vocalist Britney Spears. It makes Davey sound like Barbara Streisand!

SKRATCH: Can you elaborate on the message you try to convey when you say "broadcast the underground"?

DAVEY: It's essentially about this whole pseudo-punk/emo/indie scene that has become trendy in recent time. Most of the people involved want to get their music out to as many people as possible, but at the same time want to stay underground. It makes no sense at all to me. It seems to me these days that the music scene is more about which vintage store you bought your sweater at or how many 7" vinyl records you own, when I believe it should be about the music itself and going to shows for the love of the music, not the fashion show.

SKRATCH: Most of your songs illustrate the essence of lost love and getting older. Does

writing about this help you heal?

DAVEY: Music to us is very therapeutic. Just seeing the kids in the crowd screaming the same lyrics that mean so much to me is very comforting. It's good to know that you aren't the only one that feels that certain emotion. We all share the same hardships and hurt growing up in this time period. I think that is part of the reason why music is so touching and why fans connect to certain bands in such a strong way. Kids connect so deeply with artists because sometimes they feel that a certain lyric in a certain song was ripped straight from their diary. It is very comforting for people to get together and sing along with everyone else who has the same problem.

SKRATCH: A phrase that caught my ear is: "I've waded in deeper water hoping that I drown." Because you didn't let yourself drown. How does this denote your feelings about everyday obstacle courses and everyday hope for something better?

DAVEY: This song is really about how so many times we try to evoke so much negative emotion out of a situation, when there really isn't that much there. Sometimes you really wonder if the artists write these "heartache" songs because they really mean it or if they know that the hurting youth of America will latch on to these songs and make them rock stars. It seems that they try to manufacture this "hurting, wallowing in self-pity" façade that really isn't there. So many people go to shows and whine about how life is and how



it sucks to be alive, then after the show they get in their BMWs and drive to their mansions in the hills of Southern California. Honestly, you don't have much to whine about. I also understand that money doesn't buy you happiness, but I see that the whole (GOD forbid the word) emo scene is turning into a huge bandwagon of popularity. It seems that it's cool to be the loser kid nowadays—so that's what everyone wants to be.

SKRATCH: What is the extent of touring this year?

BOBBY: In 2004, we plan on touring extensively throughout the U.S. starting in January. For two weeks we'll be going through Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. In the spring, we plan on touring California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada. We are also working on some Warped Tour dates this summer.

SKRATCH: What are some procedures you guys will be taking to pro-

mote this album? Will there be any attempts to have the "bigger" radio stations broadcast your underground yet overground musical sound?

BOBBY: To be honest, as a band it is difficult to get on bigger radio stations. We have pretty much scrapped YOUR NEW FACE OF CORRUPTION and are using the five-song demo to promote the forthcoming Metaphor Is Audio record, which should be out sometime in 2004 on Top Notch Records.

SKRATCH: What underground bands do you think are short-changed in the music scene and should be recognized to the masses?

BOBBY: Letter Kills, who you all will be hearing about shortly. Also, bands like Jenoh, 401 Waterman, In Ashes We Lie, Slow Coming Day, Hot Like a Robot, and any other bands that bust their asses and never get a chance to do anything because of people who are close minded and dogmatic.

SKRATCH: According to your bios, most of you enjoy the emotional part of rock music, listening to such bands as Coldplay, The Cure, Dashboard Confessional, and Radiohead. Your music definitely follows along those lines. Will you keep on making this type of soothing music?

BOBBY: We always want to grow and learn about music and ourselves. We listen to such a variety of different bands that we take something from and apply it to our own playing styles and influences. We hope to continue to make soothing music, I guess, but don't expect us to keep to any formulas or guidelines. We just want to make music that feels good and inspires to help people.

SKRATCH: What are some issues today that concern you guys?

DAVEY: Well, I think an issue that needs to do away is hypocrisy in the church—Christianity, to be specific. The majority of Christians in this nation need to wake up and realize that being segregated and judging people will not get you anywhere.

SKRATCH: An issue that everyone is focused on these days is the allegations against Michael Jackson. What are your opinions on this case?

BOBBY: He is a great artist, and he is getting way too much bad press right now. People should just let him deal, without all the drama.

Find out where you can get a copy of Metaphor Is Audio's five-song demo at www.metaphorisaudio.com.

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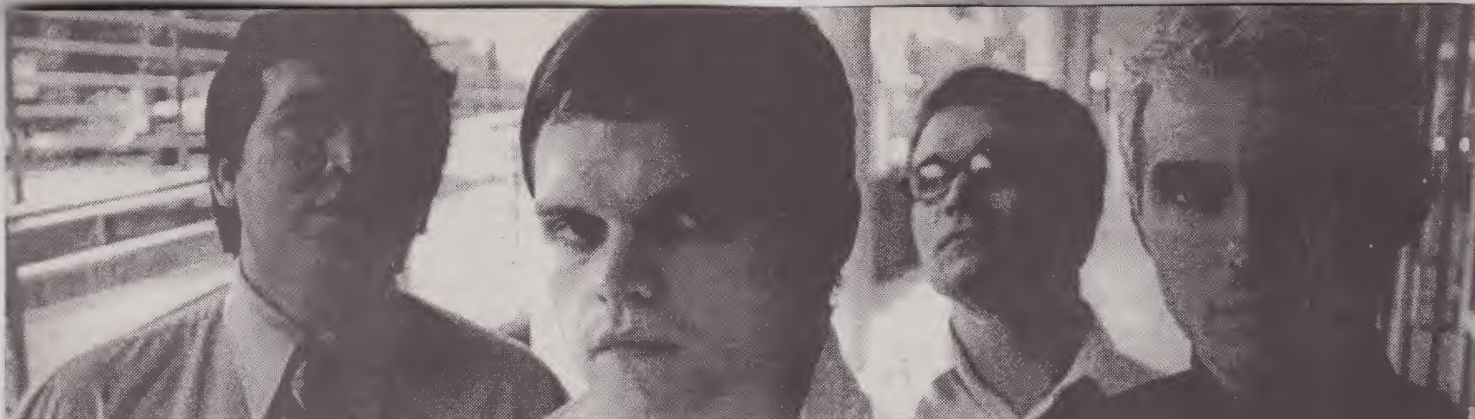
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★ BOSS MARTIANS ★

BOSS MARTIANS
By Janelle Jones

Prolific Seattle-based singer/songwriter/guitarist Evan Foster mustn't sleep. Constantly writing new material (for both his main band, Boss Martians, or his solo projects), the man doesn't seem to ever slow down, putting out records left and right. A master of many genres—but always an adamant adherent of true rock 'n' roll—he adeptly articulates his disdain for modern trends, like the new school of pop-punk: "It's kinda like Cheez-Wiz: grab a can off a shelf and fuckin' spray that shit on a cracker." Brilliant stuff. Read on to learn more about this musical genius, his bands, and his latest release, *THE SET-UP*.

SKRATCH: Are you doing anything else with Mystery Action?

EVAN: Well, basically, right before the previous Boss Martians album [*MAKING THE ROUNDS*], I decided to roll all my songwriting efforts with Mystery Action [...] into Boss Martians and do it all under the name Boss Martians. So right now [...], except for the rare track here and there, there probably won't be many more Mystery Action releases, but you never know. We're so busy with Boss Martians, but there may be a Mystery Action EP here and there. Mystery Action is really focused on super-poppy—I mean REALLY truly poppy...oh fuck! How can I put it? Mystery Action began being what Boss Martians kinda have ultimately become. There's way more garage rock to Boss Martians. I mean, Boss Martians are power-pop/garage rock/rock 'n' roll/whatever you wanna call it, but Mystery Action is usually gonna be pretty purely pop. (Sorry for all the confusing terminology there.)

SKRATCH: I think I got it. [Laughs] So *THE SET-UP* is your fifth album. You guys started out as surf punk?

EVAN: Well, we started out like surf/garage, more or less. [...] We played [that] until around probably '98 or early '99, and then that was about the time I put the Martians on hold for a little while to do the Mystery Action project and do some power-pop and stuff like that. But as everything played out, I decided to roll it all into Boss Martians, keep on rocking the garage stuff...but start incorporating a lot of the other influences, like the power-pop and the rock 'n' roll and stuff like that. One thing about the Martians is the influences go far and wide, but I really try and make sure we maintain our own identity, our own sound. It's based around the guitar and the organ. The keyboards are a really, really big part of the band, no matter what—be it power-pop or be it garage, punk rock, or whatever you wanna call it. Everybody seems to have an opinion on the new album. A lot of people are calling it power-pop and that's fine, they can call it whatever they want; but at the basis of everything is, like, total rock 'n' roll music. That's one of the

most important things for me, personally. So, anyways, let's see here.... Some time around '99, when I decided to roll all of the efforts under the banner of Boss Martians, then we started to experiment with some different sounds. My songwriting took on some additional angles [...], then ultimately we started playing with heavier-sounding rhythm sections—bass players and drummers and stuff—so that helped it rock a little bit more. And then we've just been going since then.

SKRATCH: Okay, so, five albums, and...

EVAN: I was gonna say it's really interesting as far as the five albums go; you can totally see the progression of the band with the total, total, pure surf with the first two albums. The third album started to show some definite garage, but there was still surf, and then there was actually a little bit of power-pop, I would say garage, punk, and power-pop more coming into the mix on the third album. And then by the fourth album, *MAKING THE ROUNDS*, it was straight-up rock 'n' roll—I mean, straight-up garage rock 'n' roll. There's definitely some punk-rock influence, too, on the fourth one. And then now by the fifth album, it's got the punk rock [...], the garage, and then it's definitely got the power-pop. That's what I'm starting to read more with the reviews that are just starting to come in. The album's really not been out for a long time at all; it's only been out for a month-and-a-half, officially. But one thing is: at the root for me, personally, before I was into the whole surf-music/garage-rock thing and all the '60s stuff, I was a punk-rock kid, totally. I always dug super-poppier punk rock, stuff like *The Descendents* and *Dag Nasty* and shit like that. [...] So, for me, before I discovered the whole surf thing and got into that, I was just like purely a punk-rock teenage kid, man, totally; that was at the root of everything I was really into.

SKRATCH: Yeah, I read somewhere that one of your influences is *The Damned*.

EVAN: Yeah, I've always loved *The Damned*. The early, early *Damned* recordings on Stiff Records were really influential on me when I heard those in high school, songs like "Neat Neat Neat". I don't know if you can tell this. Have you listened to *THE SET-UP*?

SKRATCH: Yeah, I have.

EVAN: Okay, it's like there's so much '77 to fucking, like, '81...



SKRATCH: Yeah, that's why I brought it up.

EVAN: It's so much like '77 to '82 influence going on. Plus, one artist I've always loved is Elvis Costello, obviously, Elvis Costello and the Attractions. Especially The Joe Jackson Band, too, the first three albums—I fuckin' love those. LOOK SHARP is one of my favorite albums.

SKRATCH: Your last record before this appeared in 2002, and THE SET-UP came out in 2003. Were you pressured to finish it, or were you just very prolific in your writing?

EVAN: Actually, if you want the truth, I didn't plan on having THE SET-UP come out in 2003, so there was...It wasn't like pressure, but the label said, "Hey, we really think we need to do a 2003 release," so I was into that, I was excited about it, I was kinda happy about the challenge—so I sat down and wrote the album. I really only had four weeks to write, so I had to put it together in about four weeks solid, 'cause we were at the tail-end of one of our tours in the springtime in early May, and the label said, "Hey, we wanna record in late June." I was like, "Fuck! That's really close." I got into the idea, though, 'cause I really wanted to make a record that sounded pretty fresh and live, [meaning that] I wanted it to sound like a lot of energy and I wanted some rawness, like just get in and rock 'n' roll. I didn't want it to sound tame or anything; I really wanted it to sound alive and just spontaneous in certain regards. [...] I had a couple songs ready: "Walk Away" was ready, "I Am Your Radio" and "Looking for You" was ready, but those were the only three ready to go, so I had to come home and just kinda holed up in my kitchen here (that's where my four-track is) and just banged it out. And I was pretty stoked with most of it. [...] It wasn't bad pressure at all; it was actually good pressure. I needed it. It helped invigorate me.

SKRATCH: What's your newest material like? Is it in the same vein as THE SET-UP, or are you going in a different direction?

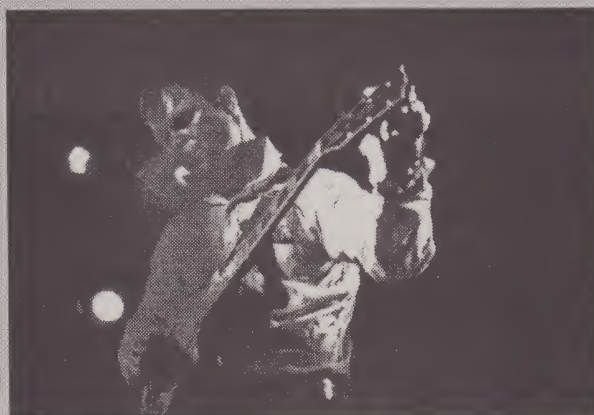
EVAN: [It's] got a bit of a refocusing on the garage, but it's a little

harder, a little more sneering, [...] and a little bit more venomous. And you may not wanna say the word "venomous," 'cause people may confuse it with the death-metal band

TOGETHER: Venom. [Laughter]

EVAN: Totally, but it's a little darker, a little louder, a little more garage. But I'm trying to maintain some of the same pop elements we achieved on THE SET-UP, so I'm trying to roll elements of MAKING THE ROUNDS and elements of THE SET-UP and the new elements I've been able to tap into—which I'm really excited about—into the next album. I'm trying to keep the best of what we did on each album (in my opinion) and just try and keep on refining it and bringing it forward, especially experimenting with some new keyboard sounds, too. There's no question it'll definitely be a rock 'n' roll album, but I think there'll be about two major surprises on [it] that I'm really looking forward to dropping on people.

Boss Martians will be doing some major touring this year. Get details at www.bossmartians.com.



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WAYPOINT
By Don Sill

In the beginning it looked as though Waypoint were well on their way to the punk-rock forefront. Their 2002 demo was earning a steady buzz, and the boys from La Crescenta were getting solid bookings all across the SoCal scene. Then, like having a stone cast through glass dreams, everything shattered after vocalist Adam decided to leave the band simply because he wasn't having fun. And just like that, everything fell apart. Bassist Cesar and guitarist Dan would also walk away, leaving original members drummer Tony Cicero and guitarist Jim Present to pick up the pieces. Damaged but determined, Cicero and Present soon recruited former Downshift guitarist Scott and bassist Matt and began rebuilding their band. Now, nearly a year later, Waypoint is still searching for the key element for their line-up: the singer.

SKRATCH spoke with Cicero recently about the bumpy road this band has had and their persistence to succeed.

SKRATCH: You guys have had a bumpy road. What's going on with the band right now?

CICERO: Well, we're looking for a singer right now. We've auditioned a bunch of guys over the last year.

SKRATCH: What happened with the original Waypoint singer?

CICERO: Well, [...] I don't think [Adam] was having as much fun as he thought he would. There's a little more work involved than he thought, you know? He thought it was gonna be all fun and games and play for hundreds of people, but unfortunately it doesn't work that way. You gotta pay your dues. You gotta get out there and play for 12 people on a Monday night. That's all part of the game.

SKRATCH: You gotta take on the rain to get to the rainbow.

San Diego. He just wanted to go back to school and what not. You gotta do what you gotta do. I hope it works out for him.

SKRATCH: Well, it's a good thing you found this out early on.

CICERO: Absolutely, man. But I tell you, we made a few demos with him, and the response was great. He had a unique voice that we really liked, and it will be really tough to follow that lead; but we'll be doing our best to find someone else. But we're kinda picky about finding the next singer.

SKRATCH: What does it take to be the singer of Waypoint?

CICERO: Well, because we're a punk band, people think that you need to scream and yell and swear, and we're going through people left and right. We're looking for people who can sing and hold a tune, have some range and sing different stuff. It doesn't have to be at a hundred miles an hour, but it needs to be different. Look, there's a million bands out there that are really good, so unless you're amazing, you're just gonna get swallowed up out there and lost in the shuffle—so you gotta be amazing.

SKRATCH: Amazing?

CICERO: Yeah, that's why we practice and practice. Man, we'll keep going through singers until we find that guy who throws us for a loop.

SKRATCH: How many singers do you audition?

CICERO: We do a couple a week. We can only get into the studio a couple times a week, and we have ads out everywhere. We're trying to make people understand what kind of band we are. We got guys coming in who just wanna be in a rock band and they're playing Creed and stuff, and I'm like, "Dude,

CICERO: That's a good question. The thing is, I have a little more control if I'm in the band already, like the direction the band takes and stuff; but if I come into a band that's already established, then I lose that. The chance of me finding an amazing band that I like is rare, and most bands that are amazing already have a drummer, so I think my chances are better staying with what I got and working with people that I want to include and having that control.

SKRATCH: Have you tried moving one of the current band members into the vocal spot?

CICERO: Yeah, and that didn't work. [Laughs] We all know what we're good

at; everyone has their position, and it's hard to go outside of that. Adam's voice was unique, and it's real hard to find someone like that. We know what we're looking for, we just have to find it. As long as you know what you're looking for and are constantly moving forward, then eventually it will happen. The only way to fail is to quit.

Anyone interested in auditioning for Waypoint can e-mail Tony Cicero at way-point@sb-global.net.

SKRATCH: That's funny, man.

CICERO: It's been rough. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: How long have you guys been without a vocalist?

CICERO: I think we're almost at a year.

SKRATCH: Wow, you guys are picky.

CICERO: We're looking for something amazing.

SKRATCH: What is it about Waypoint that makes you so loyal? Why not check ads for other bands that need drummers? Why struggle here?

CICERO: Yeah, it's the same old story: people are going to school and still trying to find their place in the world, and I know where I'm at, so this life works for me. But other people have different priorities, and sometimes music isn't one of them.

SKRATCH: What is Adam doing now?

CICERO: He's going to school in

Waypoint

did you read the ad?"



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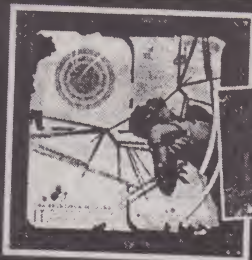


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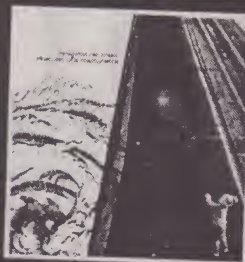
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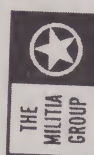
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NO CASH

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NO CASH
Interview By Don Sill

No Cash, a hardcore rock outfit from Nazareth, PA, have been burning up the East Coast for the past year, packing shows everywhere from NYC's CBGB to the Sanctuary in Stroudsburg, PA. Their debut album on VMS Records, **RUN YOUR POCKETS**, is a hard-hitting audio attack that meshes the brutality of hardcore with metal guitar riffage that ultimately leads to a genuinely bestial sound. Tunes such as "The Lucky Few", "Skate or Die", and the title track are headstrong anthems delivered in fierce, almost demonic vocals that'll quickly jump-start action on the dance floor. This past summer No Cash (which includes such characters as vocalist Big C, guitarist Judd, bassist the Fang, and drummer Arms of Fury) headed out on tour with The Pietasters, Leftover Crack, and Daycare

Swindlers and began garnering a solid buzz throughout the States.

SKRATCH caught up with frontman, Big C (a.k.a. Chris), who spoke about No Cash's debut album and their unique "Wilkes-Booth Style" that goes with it.

SKRATCH: Tell me about **RUN YOUR POCKETS**.

CHRIS: Yeah, man, it's selling real well. It came out last July, and we've been touring with it.

SKRATCH: How have the kids been responding to you guys?

CHRIS: It's been bad-ass. We've been to a lot of bad-ass cities and shit. Those kids in Texas are crazy, and Michigan is pretty cool. We had a dope time.

SKRATCH: Who writes all the lyrics?

CHRIS: I write it all, man.

SKRATCH: What inspires you?

CHRIS: I don't know. See, **RUN YOUR POCKETS** is a real sarcastic, spiteful record, I guess. I wrote about a lot of shit that was bugging me. But now I'm trying to make my shit a little more positive and get a message out.

SKRATCH: You have a track called "Wilkes-Booth Style". What do you mean by that?

CHRIS: "Wilkes-Booth Style" is like, "Fuck that, man, you can't sit back and really deal with shit." I'm not saying that I'm about to go and kill the president or anything like that. [But] I mean, I wouldn't mind if

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...WE GOT SOME BAD-ASS SHIT, AND I WANT EVERYBODY TO HEAR IT.

somebody else did it, [Laughs] you know? It's kinda like a hidden message.

SKRATCH: I mean, you guys also have the drawing of Lincoln getting assassinated on the back cover.

CHRIS: Man, it's all just fuckin' imagery, basically. Wilkes Booth was a crazy mother-fucker who did what he had to do, you know?

SKRATCH: So, do you think that Booth was a hero?

CHRIS: Well, I don't think he did a good thing; I just think he...I wouldn't say triumphant,

but he was a fucked-up dude. [Laughs] Some people take it and think we're racist or something. They're like, "Why Lincoln?" But you gotta look past that and see it as a dude killing a president.

SKRATCH: In your opinion, has there ever been a good president? or do they all such and deserve to die?

CHRIS: I don't know, man. I don't really pay that much attention to it. I try and stay a little politically keen, but I really don't give a fuck, man.

SKRATCH: Now, you're a young cat? How old are you, man?

CHRIS: I'm 18 years old.

SKRATCH: So you're at that age where you can be drafted and a lot of your peers are out there on the battlefield in Iraq and what not. What's your opinion on this war?

CHRIS: War sucks. There's a lot of fucked-up shit

going on, and everybody needs to chill out. That's kind of the message I want to convey.

SKRATCH: You definitely come off angry.

CHRIS: Yeah, well....

SKRATCH: Where does all that anger come from?

CHRIS: I don't know, man. I was just a belligerent kid. It kind of fucked me up, because now I'm all depressed and always questioning shit. I don't know. I'm trying to snap out of it and maybe turn my song topics a little deeper. I get so pissed about the right side, but then the left side is brain washing you with the same kind of shit, so I just try to be myself.

SKRATCH: And see things right down the middle.

CHRIS: Yeah, man.

SKRATCH: What track off RUN YOUR POCKETS best represents No Cash?

CHRIS: That really depends. I look at the

record as a book with different chapters, and each one is kind of represents a different way people can feel. Like, they can feel angry or they can get down and smoke some pot and chill, or it can be some poetic shit. But I'm down with "Run Your Pockets", because that's the title track and the whole message of the album.

SKRATCH: This isn't MTV punk.

CHRIS: No, we're not going poppy. We try and keep it melodic, but we gotta make it raw.

SKRATCH: No Cash is making waves touring and what not.

CHRIS: Yeah, man, I'm stoked. I just want shit to blow up even more. I don't mean to brag, but we're doing something that no one else is, and I just wanna get it out there. I just think we got some bad-ass shit, and I want everybody to hear it.



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REFUTE
By Janelle Jones

Refute, the two-year-old self-proclaimed "NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC of rock 'n' roll," aren't easily classified. In fact, when not joking about where the band fits in genre-wise, co-founders frontman Nathan and bassist Brandon had some difficulty describing their sound, finally coming up with "energetic emo-rock." Whilst the roaring fires in California raged on, the two discussed their releases (including their most recent EP, *A BOOK BY ITS COVER*), what made them almost "poop" themselves, and some disturbing on-stage horror stories.

SKRATCH: Can you talk about your previous release a bit?

NATHAN: So *LETTERS FROM THE TRAIN* was, like, the concept. It was really just kind of some songs we had formulated from an earlier, poppier stage of the band, and then we also had some harder elements kind of thing. I mean, I really still feel like we're [...] progressing; we're still really young and new and still kind of

nowadays are having so many pressures put on them—especially from their own school system—that they need to be taking drugs to fit into this classification or this status quo, just to fit with the standard of how kids should be, and kids aren't able to be themselves. I don't think I would've been able to write any kind of music if I was [raised] on Ritalin or whatever that other shit is they give kids. And so that's just an aspect that I feel strongly about. We're not a political band by any means. I mean, [only to the extent that] we are just because that type of thing is being pushed

BRANDON: No, not really, 'cause when people ask us what other bands [we] sound like, we basically name bands we listen to. In some aspects we sound partially like the bands we're naming, but it's [...] just a matter that we haven't come up with something clever enough! [Laughs]

NATHAN: Well, this might clarify it: Here's the genres we listen to: Brandon listens to indie rock...maybe, like, more pop-oriented stuff, wouldn't you say?

BRANDON: Yeah, sometimes.

NATHAN: And it's a variety, but he listens to more emo-type stuff. I listen to

would be a lot easier; but where we live, it's like you just take what you can get. We just happened to find something that really works.

SKRATCH: What is the best part of your live performance?

BRANDON: My dancing.

NATHAN: Yeah, Brandon's quite the dancer, I must say. Well, I think...yeah, Brandon's dancing is pretty damn good. I don't know if I got anything that can top that. It's also really cool when people sing along, which is something you hear about. [Sarcastically] "Uh, yeah, I love to connect with the fans." But honestly, that's really cool. If you can write something, and that idea can be just as real for some other person you have no association with except that they like your music, it's really neat. You kind of trip out. I remember the first e-mail we got was from some kid who heard our demo years ago. This was the demo before even our last CD, and he heard it and e-mailed us. He's like, "Oh, I love your guys' CD. Let me know when you're playing a show." And we...seriously, Brandon and I almost pooped ourselves, 'cause I



just [finding] the sound that we're really going for. And the last release, to be honest...all the guys in the band would probably agree it's kind of a weak release compared to what we just put out, because we kind of just wanted to put something out so we could start getting [our] name out there and start getting some music out there. And there were only really a select few tracks that kids were really even interested in, so it was kind of like a...

BRANDON: Yeah, 'cause the tracks were so diverse. Some songs were poppy—like, REALLY poppy...

NATHAN: Like retardo-pop.

BRANDON: ...And other songs were a little more melodic; and if you played the songs back-to-back, the only reason you'd know it was the same band was the singer. So we were still kind of searching. They were all good songs, so we thought we'd release them all together.

SKRATCH: You mention one of the themes on *A BOOK BY ITS COVER* is the "over drugging of children in the public school system." Can you elaborate?

NATHAN: [Laughs] I knew that was gonna come up. It's really somewhat more of a personal observation. Actually, I'll just give you a little story. We were at this show in our hometown, and these kids came up to us, and they're trying to joke around with the band. I kept hearing these kids saying, "Oh, I didn't take my medication today." And they talk about it like it's something cool, and it was just...Seriously, the girls couldn't have been older than maybe 12, and they're going on about how they need to take medication. It's just mind-boggling, the fact that so many kids

so much by the government to keep kids on these kinds of programs, and schools are pushing it just because [they] get funding the more kids they have on these psychotropic medication programs, and it's disturbing. That's just always been something I didn't see as the right thing. Most kids don't need it, and kids should just be allowed to be kids and laugh or talk or do whatever the fuck they want. They're kids—give 'em a break. So that's a main aspect. I know the title's a little too blunt for some people's taste—like when they read it they just kind of laugh a little 'cause it's so...Like, it's "Don't drug your kids"! I don't know. Some people think it's a little blunt, but that's just what I really want to put out; and people need to know that.

SKRATCH: The band's sound isn't easily classified. Is that a factor? Do you NOT want to be categorized or linked with a certain genre?

that, as well, but then I listen to a little bit more hardcore. And then Stephan (who's our drummer) listens to metal. He's a total metalhead, which is really funny...

BRANDON: He's got long hair and the whole shebang.

NATHAN: And Andrew (our guitarist) just listens to classical music. Anything that we bring to the table, no matter what it is, he'll be like, "Oh, okay." He'll be, like, totally bored, 'cause he's just into classical music; so that kind of adds an interesting thing to it. And [Chris], the new [guitarist], is pretty much into melodic hardcore. So it's really weird when you get five kids from just out of the big city area—like where we live, Camarillo—'cause it's not in L.A., and you get 'em together, and they all come from such different backgrounds. But I found in other places you can find a lot more kids who are into the same kind of music. Let's say we wanted to start a band that sounded like Thursday or At the Drive-In. If we were in L.A., I'm sure it

didn't know [it] was possible that someone could hear a CD and it could be as amazing for them as The Postal Service is for me or something like that. But yeah, the live show is good. And Stephan, he's as amazing live as [Brandon] is! I mean, even better live, sometimes, 'cause he just messes around and has fun. And, you know, we're just a crazy bunch of guys.

SKRATCH: Have you ever had any horror stories on stage?

NATHAN: Oh my god.

BRANDON: [Laughs] So many.

NATHAN: Well, there was one time we were in Fresno playing a show—an in-store at Tower

Records—and I swung the microphone around and grabbed it with my hand, and it came up and [...] put my tooth through my upper lip. And it hit the mic my tooth did. That's what freaked me out: the fact that I actually heard and felt my tooth hit the microphone through my lip. And then I looked down, and I was bleeding on the microphone. But—

SKRATCH: Through your lip?

NATHAN: Yeah, it went, like, through my lip. It was really weird—like, it was disturbing. So I just covered my face and kept singing, and by the time I looked over, there was just all this congealed blood on the mic. It was pretty brutal.

Being that some of the members are still in school they range in age from 16 to 20. Refute haven't been able to tour that extensively outside Ventura County; but they hope to accomplish that feat sometime soon.



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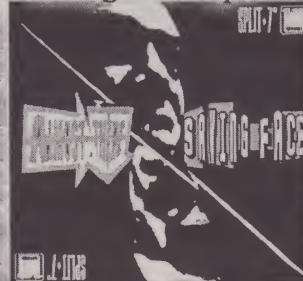
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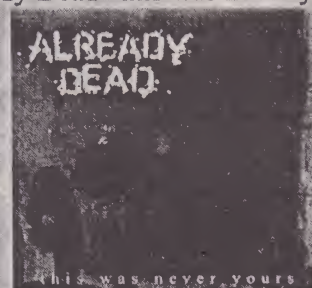
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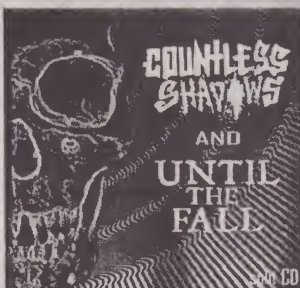


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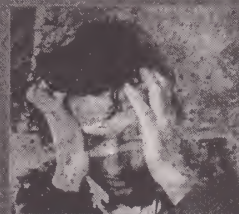
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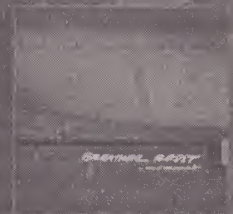
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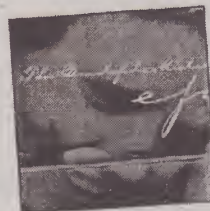
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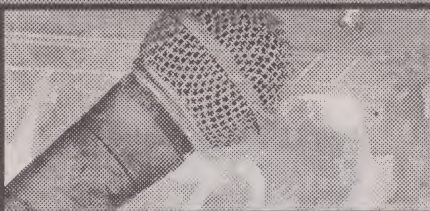
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SHOW REVIEWS

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ALKALINE TRIO REGGIE AND THE FULL EFFECT FROM AUTUMN TO ASHES NO MOTIV

November 28, 2003 @ Hollywood Palladium
(Hollywood, CA.)

By Ian Wilkins

Are you ready? I said: are you ready? Well, I was, and the night turned out to be a medium letdown. I had been looking forward to the show for a few weeks, but I was a little let down...until Alkaline Trio came on. The Hollywood Palladium used to be a great place to see shows, but now it resembles what I think a concentration camp would be like. After the strip search and anal probing, the "guards" usher you into the great hall, where there is no smoking of any kind (so so much for the stuff you hid in your jacket). Beers were \$7 a pop (not including the tip). BUT, the one thing that the venue always promises is great sound and plenty of places where you can get some killer views of the show.

No Motiv usually puts on a great show, but tonight was the complete opposite. The set started out okay, but it turned into a horrible train wreck by the second song. My biggest complaint was the singer; he just didn't seem like he wanted to be there. Sure, he screamed out the vocals like he was supposed to, but there just wasn't any heart behind it. The instrumentals sounded decent, but in the future I hope they might spend a few more minutes setting up for the show to make sure everything is in tune and working properly.

From Autumn to Ashes has been around for a little while now. Every once in a blue moon I might catch them on the TV or read about them in some magazine. I am amazed at how popular they are getting, since their live show really isn't what it should be. The singer whined way too much, and the guitarist just fed the fire. On the other hand, the drummer should look for a different band, because he is the shit. I felt his double-bass beats and high-hat work in my stomach.

After a long and delightful wait for the bathroom, I arrived to see Reggie and the Full Effect appear on stage in Santa gear (sans white beards). The band consists of five members, two of them being the "lead" singers. Sometimes the dual microphone thing can be really good when they work with each other (e.g., Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers back in '83), or it can be horribly, horribly wrong. Reggie and the Full Effect were the latter. They did try to pull off some cool shit (like covering old Slayer), but they really fumbled the ball when they attempted to do The Ramones. At one point in the show, the Santa outfits must have become a little too warm, because there were male undergarments being worn on stage. (In my Forrest Gump voice:) That's all I want to say about that. In my humble opinion (and I am talking Gandhi humble), they should have been the second band to take the stage and not the one opening for Alkaline Trio.

Okay, you have now read 500 words (give or take) to get to the good shit (the chronic of the review, if you

will). Alkaline Trio—who is loved by fans all over the world—is now on stage. This is what the thousands of fans around me have been waiting so patiently for. It is a frenzy of cheering, complete madness, shit, fuck, crap. (Sorry, my Tourette's is acting up from all the excitement.) Adorned in their little suits, they start the night off with "This Could Be Love", following it up with "Stupid Kid" (I think that was it. At this point in the evening I had spent almost 50 bucks at the bar). One of my favorite singers at present is Daniel Andriano, and just being able to see and hear him live was true bliss. Sure, they were here promoting the newest album, GOOD MOURNING, but that didn't stop them from playing a couple of the oldies, like "Mr. Chainsaw" and "We've Had Enough"—you know, the really good shit. To me, Alkaline Trio live sound much better than on record, a little bit more grainy not so cleaned-up. Shit, fuck, crap—it's just too much excitement for one person.

If you are reading this and are about to gouge out your eyes because you cannot stand the fact that you just missed Alkaline Trio for the second time in a row, please don't. It's okay—there is always next time (I say, laughing as I walk away down a dark hallway).

SLOW COMING DAY METAPHOR IS AUDIO STEREO TRAGEDY SAME WAY AGAIN GUNSHOT BEGINNINGS BOBBY BREAKDOWN

December 5, 2003 @ Showcase Theater (Corona, CA)

By Heather Jagger

I was really excited about this show, because a few specific bands I love were playing. I pulled up, and there were only about 10 people outside, but slowly the place got a bit more crowded, and the line circled around the

Bobby Breakdown was a trio of teenage boys from Murrieta with surprising talent. When they first got on stage, they just looked like a few bros who thought it would be cool to start a band, but they were decent. They had a similar sound to the once-known band Silverchair and were clearly there to have fun. They played their little hearts out for the sparse crowd, which I thought was awesome. There were a few loyal friends/fans up front singing along with every word. Motivation, I guess you'd say. So, although they weren't very known, I think this band is on their way to having more than 15 fans.



Gunshot Beginning is a bunch of kids that really stole my attention. As I watched from the balcony, I noticed a lot more people came up front for these kids from Temecula. With a 15-year-old singer, they really surprised me. They brought up the excitement of the crowd. Still, the crowd was only about 30 people up front and a few stragglers hanging out in the back, but

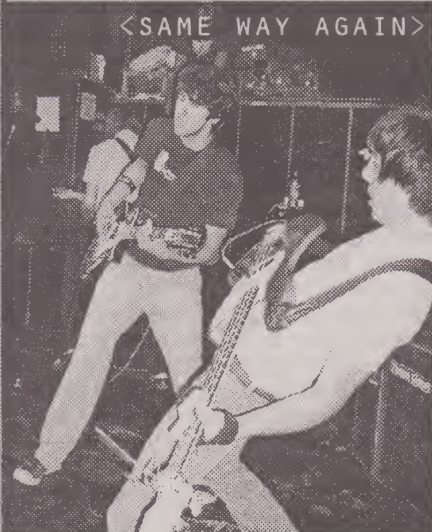


they got the place moving. This screamo band belonged together, and they had good timing and an awesome sound, which blew people away. The aspect that stood out the most was the second side screamer. That kid

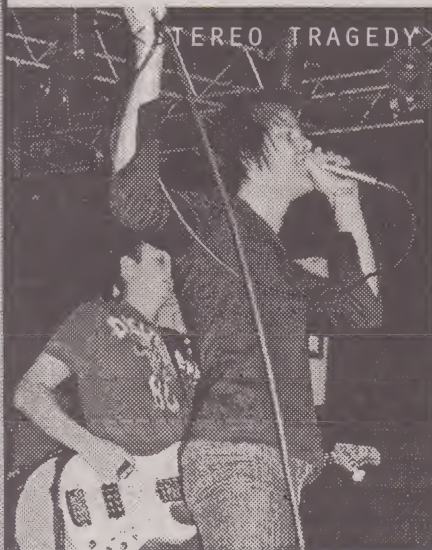
corner of the Showcase. I went inside as soon as I heard the first band starting up.

has a pair of lungs on him!

If you like good music and you were at this show, you would have definitely noticed Same Way Again, a Riverside/Corona-based band with slightly more experience and a few years more in age. In my opinion, these guys stole the show. Everyone randomly poured in for these guys. They had a tremendous amount of love for what they do, and you could see that in every second of their performance. I've seen these guys many times before, and every time they play their song "Shoe Box Memories", the crowd pees their pants. You don't see many bands with a drummer talented enough to play AND scream at the same time. Most people can't



think that hard. If you've ever seen this band, you'd know about the famous moves of the bassist. I won't even bother trying to explain, but let's just say water bottles were flying everywhere. Their melodies were catchy, and these guys know how to write great songs. With the best audience reaction of the night and spazzy 16-year-old girls screaming after every song, all I can say about these guys is: "amazing!"



I'm sure you've all heard of Falling Cycle, but have you heard about Stereo Tragedy? With some members of the big FC, they took on a few new guys—and a whole new sound. Completely different from the old hardcore they used to play, they now bust out some melodic pop-core. I could tell from their performance and the energy they gave—or rather, DIDN'T give—that they're still getting it all together, not quite sure how to play

music other than hardcore. Their stage presence wasn't all it could be, but the two girls that were up front head-banging obnoxiously with their long hair flying everywhere I'm guessing would disagree. Some say they're sell-outs, some say they do what it takes. It's all a matter of opinion, I guess. But if you're all about the pop-core, then I'd definitely suggest Stereo Tragedy.

I'd heard of the next band from a few people, and I had mixed thoughts about their music. Metaphor Is Audio is a somewhat local band from Redlands. I noticed they had a few catchy songs to sing along to, and they gave their all. The crowd got into it and soaked in their love for playing music. It was little too poppy for my taste, but obviously not for everyone else's. These four guys sounded like they put some time into it, and it looks like it paid off.



Last, but definitely not least, was Slow Coming Day. I've heard a lot about this band, but this was my first time seeing them. These guys seemed to know what it was all about. Even though 80% of the audience left before they even took the stage, they still played, and they played well. I gained respect for these guys because they didn't seem to care too much about recognition. All of their songs sounded great and had great detail. All the guys seemed really mellow, which is just nice every once in a while. With their indie look and matching indie sound, they did awesome.

Overall, this show was a breath of fresh air. It was something OTHER than you're typical "my crew is gonna beat up your crew" show. The kids at this show were there to have fun and listen to some good music, not to beat someone up in the pit. I could actually walk around without being looked up and down by some scenester comparing whose clothes or hair is better. If you're looking for a show that isn't a super crowded sweaty fashion competition, I suggest going to see one of these bands.

STRETCH ARM STRONG THE BLEED THE KINISON THE A.K.A.S WITH OR WITHOUT YOU

December 11, 2003 @ Chain Reaction (Anaheim CA)
By Luke Skywalker

After finishing my last final for the semester at 3:30, I packed up my laundry, guitar, and CD collection and headed for Anaheim. Luckily, I hit rush hour, so I was

able to ponder both my failing grades and relationships while listening to the CDs I was sent to review. I drove relentlessly to see the band who has escaped my viewing for far too long, Stretch Arm Strong.

As I stood in line for the doors to open to the club, I began to feel the crisp night air and regretted leaving my jacket in the car. Close to 100 kids shivered against a wall, waiting for the security guards to pat down each person. I struck up a conversation with a girl wearing a Comeback Kid T-shirt—who, coincidentally, was a friend/photographer for the first band With or Without You. Though they were the opening band, With or Without You was one of the most appealing bands of the night. Hailing from Bakersfield, CA, the hardcore quintet was able to get some of the early arrivals to slam dance. In jest, they did an Inside Out cover, in which the lead singer screamed more than he had before. And this wasn't normal hardcore screaming, but like metal screaming. I half-expected to see some head-banging, especially from the bass player, what with his AC/DC T-shirt and shoulder-length hair.

Shortly after With or Without You, I was confronted by the punk-rock sounds of The A.K.A.s. I was leaning up against the side of the building while tapping my foot. The singer asked the crowd to start moving, but I was content to stay right where I was—and so was the rest of the crowd. The quintet played songs from their debut album WHITE DOVES & SMOKING GUNS (released by Florida-based label Fueled by Ramen), and their "eclectic live show" (as its described in their online biography) was not so memorable. I do give The A.K.A.s credit for their style, though: all of their outfits were matching.

Similar in sound to the International Noise Conspiracy, The Kinison blared political anthems to the audience. Thankful for them putting me on their guest list, I was determined to watch their entire set. But after waiting for them to set up, I grew bored and decided to bear the brunt of the wilderness outside. Only lasting through songs "American Collectable" and "No Talk", I give The Kinison an E for effort.

Probably the most anticipated band of the night was The Bled. I have heard many good things about the band from friends of mine, and I have been played selected songs. My first encounter of The Bled was from a free CD sampler of Fiddler artists in ALTERNATIVE PRESS with "The Sound of Sulfur". Before they started their set, fans began crowding in close to the stage, and I even overheard a petite girl say, "Do you even know how freakin' awesome this will be?" I had no idea. As lead singer James began their first song, the audience roared in approval, and the largest pit I have ever seen at Chain Reaction widened from the front of the club to the back. Throughout the band's set, the crowd exhibited their admiration by throwing their highest roundhouses and flailing their arms like windmills. I just hoped the same display of dancing would continue for Stretch Arm Strong. As the younger fans of The Bled stepped back to catch their breath, an older crowd of Stretch Arm Strong fans moved forward in their stead.

My jaw dropped and my fist rose as the crowd began chanting for Stretch Arm Strong. Playing old favorites from A REVOLUTION TRANSMISSION like "For the Record" and "When Words Escape" encouraged both pitting and hardcore dancing from old fans, and new songs from ENGAGE like "Double Shoots Double" brought in new fans. Lead singer Chris McLane's stage presence and exciting lyrics only fostered more enthusiasm for SAS's music. The South Carolina group chatted it up some, as well, promoting charity for the home-

less this holiday season and asking people to express unity by introducing themselves to the person next to them. The band continued playing their music, including my personal favorite, "Second Chances".

The overall performance of Stretch Arm Strong was superb, and the entire night was equally good. My night was made even better as I exited the show and was given a demo of a new band, Broken Front. A bitterly cold night turned out to be the warmest evening I've had all season.

SUPERJOINT RITUAL DEVIL DRIVER INTENTIONAL RAGE

December 13, 2003 @ the Ventura Theater
(Ventura, CA)

Words and photos by Mark A. Whitaker

Touring in support of its newest album, A LETHAL DOSE OF AMERICAN HATRED, Superjoint Ritual made a stop in Ventura to get the word out to the non-believers that Superjoint Ritual was here to stay and you'd better get used to it. I was scheduled to interview Phil Anselmo, but due to scheduling conflicts (Phil is an avid boxing fan), we ended up not being able to conduct the interview. I was also doing a show review, so I hung out and watched the show and got a great first hand experience of the black-metal assault Superjoint Ritual brings to live shows.



After getting something to eat, I went inside to see what the evening would bring. Right as I walked in, Intentional Rage was already on stage tearing it up with a fast style and hard edge to its music. Intentional Rage's singer (who was also on guitar) was keeping the crowd moving with his deep voice and animated singing presence. Not content to just hold the mic, Ray would gesture and shake his fist with passion as he performed. The drummer was pounding out the tempo and smiling as she sang along with the music. That's right: the drummer is a she—and she can rock just as hard as the boys. Bringing the mandatory guitar leads and metal wails was the second guitarist, who would really lean into his playing to make the guitar wail even louder as he played.

Taking the stage next was Devil Driver, whose name is rooted deep in the black arts of witchcraft. I had not heard of this band before but was really pleased with its performance. Lots of heavy bass and drums, intense and fast with periods of old-school metal head-banging fury. The singer would take time out in between pacing the stage to standing still, letting the power of

his words sink in to the hungry minds of their fans. The guitarist and bass player were awesome. They would just get into the music and lose themselves among the shredding breakdowns. It was a great set, very much alive with energy and power.

There was small delay as the mics were checked and re-checked to make sure that they were at their optimum settings to handle the lethal dose of American black metal. Once everything was adjusted for optimum performance, the lights faded to black, and out of the blackness came five shadowy figures: Phil Anselmo on vocals, Kevin Bond and Jimmy Bower on guitars, the man simply known as Ill on bass, and Joe Fazzio on drums. It seems all the time living in the Louisiana bayou has not really affected Phil too much. I hadn't heard the new CD yet, so I had only my previous exposure to Superjoint Ritual to base my opinion on. It was cool that Phil loves to talk in between songs, explain things to people, and give fans an insight about what a song is about. This works for me because Phil has a very unique view on things and isn't afraid to speak his mind about them. Superjoint Ritual's style of metal is unique: it's heavy, but still has some fast guitars to throw you off. It's a cool combination that really works. I don't know if Ill believes in drop-tuning or not, but his bass has a good low-end rumble. The two guitarists complement each other, because one guitar is slightly higher-pitched and crunchier, while the other guitar is lower and sounds fuzzier. This really works with the vocals, which alternate between low, guttural growls and high-end screams. After a few songs, I could tell fans were enjoying the show, because they were crowd-surfing and moshing like crazy. After several songs, security kicked all of the photographers and media out, but then one of the security guards motioned me to hand him my camera bag, which I did, and then he extended his hand and pulled me on stage. I thought that was the end, but I was able to hang out backstage and watch the show. At one point Phil mentioned something about a heavy breakdown. For all the hardcore bands that pride themselves on heavy breakdowns, sorry, but Superjoint Ritual has you beat. I just heard a low rumble that quickly progressed to a heavy, churning breakdown that you feel in your chest. It was intense. After the last song, Superjoint Ritual waited in the wings, deciding whether the crowd was worthy of an encore. With shouts of "Superjoint! Superjoint!" Superjoint Ritual played one more song, then retired backstage. The crowd wasn't satisfied, though, and kept yelling for another song. Phil went over to the drums, picked up the drumsticks, and played a few beats, set the sticks down, went over to Kevin Bond's guitar and played a few notes, set the guitar down, and then declared that he was multitalented. I found that to be really funny, and the crowd loved it. Then the rest of the band joined Phil for one final song. It was good to see Superjoint Ritual play again. I now have a better appreciation of the music.

MISSING 23RD MADCAP THE GOD AWFULS GUTTERMOUTH

December 28, 2003 @ the Glass House
(Pomona, CA)

By Ian Wilkins

The Glass House is one of my top five places to see a show. I think it is probably fourth on the list, but it could easily be number one if they started serving alcohol. Usually, if the band really sucks, I will sneak across the street to the local jazz bar to get a \$2 beer and let my ears mellow out for a second. Tonight's review is coming straight from a sober guy—and, for

once, it was my choice. The show was so good that I couldn't leave, not even for...well, on with the story...I mean, review.

I arrived at my desired location roughly around 8 p.m. To my surprise, the line in to the show was only halfway around the block and consisted of mostly adults, which is always a surprise at the Glass House since it is all-ages. Stepping into the half-filled venue, I arrived in time to check out Missing 23rd a very good pick for the opening band on a night of great bands. Missing 23rd played their upbeat, poppy punk for about a half an hour. They played the type of punk where everything is fast, even the slow songs. By the time they finished their set, they had the now-almost-filled room going loco. If I had to say anything negative about Missing 23rd, I might say they were a tad too refined. Loosen up the ties, guys, and have some fun.

I think I went to school with Madcap. I am still not sure. (For the first time ever I regret not buying a yearbook.) Madcap has been around for a while now, and yet they still seem to keep it on the down-low. For being such a good band, I am surprised when people in the circles I hang out in don't know who they are when I am talking about them. But now I have my chance to get on my soapbox and shout about them. Madcap has so much energy behind them that they don't need electricity to plug the amps into. Playing another 30-minute set to a packed house, Madcap rocked the joint. Fast punk and good stage demeanor always make for a good time—and a good time I had.

Okay, if you're sitting on the toilet reading this and smoking a fat doobie, I need you to put the white cocoon down. Now, push really hard. Feel that relief? That's how you're going to feel when you go and buy The God Awfuls' new CD that comes out in February. Now, pick up that doobie and take a coughing hit. Feel that? That is how you're going to feel when you see them live. Well, I did, anyway. The God Awfuls have played with so many great bands that it would make you jealous if I were to name just one. Ah, what the hell—here are three to drive you to insanity: Dead Kennedys, Youth Brigade, and Guttermouth. (Enjoy the now-necessary lobotomy.) The God Awfuls played for at least 45 minutes, which never really seems long enough. The set consisted of some new songs off their next CD and, to the delight of 10 billion screaming fans, some of the older stuff. If you haven't seen or heard of The God Awfuls, then you have been smoking way too much pot on the can, and that is just plain sad.

Thanks to a really good friend of mine that we shall name "John," I was able to see Guttermouth from the top of the stage. That's right: I was on stage right next to them as they played. Can I say that seeing Guttermouth is far better than just hearing their CDs? Being on stage is probably the safest place to be at show of this caliber. If you were standing in the middle of the floor when Guttermouth came on, then I feel really sorry for you. The floor became one of the biggest pits I have ever seen (and I have seen a lot). There was stage-diving, spitting...hell, I even watched guards pummel people in the head with a Mag Light just for trying to get on stage. (That was going a little overboard, Mark the lead singer commented.) Seeing Guttermouth at the Glass House is like a vertically-challenged person getting the 20-piece chicken McNuggets and then supper-sizing it: way to much for one person to eat, but because of your gluttony you somehow still try to make it fit...then you explode with gut-wrenching bliss. The show was only over after Guttermouth played for an hour-and-a-half—and that didn't include encore.

The whole evening was unbelievably great, and if you weren't there, then I guess there is always next time. Sorry you missed this one. (Well, not really.)

ATREYU HIMSA TO SEE YOU BROKEN NIGHTFALL SACRIFICIAL SLAUGHTER

December 28, 2003 @ the Showcase Theatre
(Corona, CA)

By Beth VanBoxtel

Lucky for me, my small car was among a vast sea of gridlock on a typical Orange County evening as I made my way northeast to the Showcase Theatre in Corona. Once I had arrived at the venue, I slipped into the wondrous, dark, and noisy establishment. As I muscled my way through the crowd, my lack of height allowed for seeing about 90% males who boldly proclaimed their favorite band across their chest (or at my eye-level) on their black shirts.

Upon arriving, I discovered Sacrificial Slaughter had already played their set, and Nightfall was in the middle of theirs. To my dismay, the crowd had not quite gotten into this band's music. Few were cheering, as most were more interested with familiar faces they could identify in the crowd. As I focused all my attention at the stage, Nightfall was quick to move on their feet. It was quite an impressive spectacle to see the drummer, girl guitarist, frontman/guitarist, and occasionally the bassist taking turns on vocals. Hailing from Yorba Linda, these metal rockers were relatively tight with their music, but not quite strong enough to boast an original riff or catchy sound. If I were to see them play again, perhaps I would give them another chance. You can decide for yourselves by checking out their songs online (<http://www.nightfallca.com>) or at the end of January with Nodes of Ranvier and Arms Bend Back.

As Nightfall finished up their set, Himsa and To See You Broken had just pulled into the venue as a result of a van breaking down. Seattle's To See You Broken burst into the venue and set up without delay. As the five-piece, all-girl band was taking the stage, the onlookers around me were quick to judge and make comments, comparing them to The Donnas and joking as if they were setting up for their boyfriends. However, I noticed a few of their arms were covered in tattoos, and the bassist looked so tough that she could probably kick my butt in a fight. I'll admit that I was taken aback as soon as they unleashed their first song. Classically trained in piano and violin, these girls played their guitars and drums exceptionally well. With hardcore influences drawn from Trial and Walls of Jericho, TSYB enticed several people to start moshing. I thoroughly enjoyed watching these girls play and am looking forward to their album release later this year. For more information on TSYB, visit <http://www.toseeyoubroken.com>.

With as much positive hype as Himsa has gotten in the previous few months from people such as Iann Robinson of MTV, I was ready to form my own opinions about the band. The crowd was getting antsy as the long-haired, harmless-looking guys from Seattle took center stage. To begin their first song, the lead vocalist lurched into the tight crowd, only to be carted back to his original location. Excitement was mounting as the drummer played heavily on the crash symbols along with superior timing on the drums. Minor technical difficulties ensued, but the band quickly continued. I was impressed by the intricate guitar work that

carried each song to its fullest capacity in the sold-out venue. Kids from the crowd were violently getting floated closer to the stage, while others dove off the balcony. During the set, Brandon Schieppati of Bleeding Through shared the stage and sang backup vocals to the captivated crowd. Himsa played "Cherum", "Girl in Glass", and their most popular song, "Rain to the Sound of Panic", filled with fast-paced melodies and explosive breakdowns. Look for them on tour with As I Lay Dying in February. Website: <http://www.himsa.org>.

For a crowd this size, there was little breathing room once Atreyu started playing "In the End We're Optimists". Most in the crowd knew the lyrics and took every waking opportunity to get seemingly closer to the man-grasping the microphone. The vocalist had a creative way of having curse words come through the pounding speakers by shoving the microphone in fans' faces as they belted out the word. Further into the song, sweat beaded up on the band members' faces, as well as everyone watching them, due to the sauna-like conditions. "Crimson Kiss" was the first song they played off of their upcoming album. The crowd celebrated it. Atreyu went on to play crowd favorites, such as "Someone's Standing on My Chest", "Ain't Love Grand", and "Dilated" flawlessly. The singer's sharp vocals were released with much passion and agony, as he delivered them over the rampant bass lines and chilling guitars—a combination so volatile that every journalist bends over backward to try to describe it. "Bleeding Mascara" and "You Eclipsed by Me" was Atreyu's one-two punch for this power-hungry crowd. The chaotic guitars and acidic vocals came together to create a newer and heavier melodic sound. The lyrics were seemingly more poetic, yet still had the dark edge that had played a part in their previous albums. Atreyu finished off their nine-song set with "Lip Gloss and Black". During that four-minute-and-27-second blast of airy guitars, strong drumming, and bass, the crowd was hypnotized by the resonating sounds of "Live, love, burn, die." Be on the lookout for the upcoming album **THE CURSE** (June 15) and DVD: <http://www.atreyurock.com>.

Slick Shoes Three Bad Jacks Tokyo Rose Still Life Projector Love Equals Death

January 3, 2004 @ Chain Reaction (Anaheim, CA)

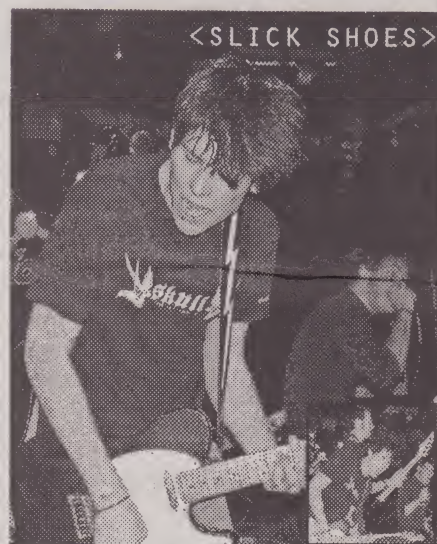
By Luke Skywalker

Chain Reaction brought five bands together, making for likely the most diverse show I've been to, a concert featuring punk, rockabilly, rock, and emocore. Unfortunately, I missed Love Equals Death due to the fact that I didn't make it on the guest list, and so it took me a while to find a way to get inside of Chain.

Upon finding a means to get into the venue free of charge, I found myself in a throng of rockabilly fans, hardcore kids, and trendy scenesters wearing cute cotton gloves with the fingertips cut off. Still Life Projector was halfway through their set when my ears adjusted to the volume and I found a wall to lean up on. After hearing just a few songs, I quickly found my critiques of the band. To become a memorable band, SLP will need to come up with a more unique sound, rather than regurgitating the same music out there right now. Towards the end of the set, I recognized a tattoo and realized it was the lead singer of Papa Roach, Coby Dick. Tempted to punch him in the stomach for selling out, I chose to refrain from violence and realized a newfound respect

for him. I mean, he was attending a small rock show.

With a melodic pop/rock sound, Tokyo Rose performed their set, yet I was not in a melancholy mood for their insightful lyrics. Lead singer Ryan Dominguez claimed illness hindered his vocal range, but from what I heard in the flawless songs like "Saturday, Everyday", "Word of Mouth", and "Phonecards and Postcards", he must have had only a slight cough. And to the band's cred-



it, they were able to get the crowd moving. And as the diversity continued through the night, the rockabilly fans grew restless for their boys, Three Bad Jacks. Frontman Elvis Siussa is a god to the large Hispanic group of followers, enduring cheers and applause for just setting his gear on stage. And as bassist Brett Williams set his massive stand-up on stage, the crowd roared equally. Rumor has it that Williams occasionally ignites his own instrument mid-set. Though Williams did not feel compelled to spark his bass on fire this show, Three Bad Jacks set was no less than amazing. "Hellbound Train" and "Ace of Spades" inspired kids in the pit to enthusiastically beat each other up, and I've never seen so many fat violent girls before. In a song dedicated to Norma Jean, midway through Williams stood up on his leaning bass,



continuing to play. And if this wasn't impressive enough, Siussa found room for himself to stand up on the bass and enhance the balancing act. As the time flew by, their set was completed, as the concert gods allowed for the band to play an encore. Dedicated to his

pregnant wife Kathy, Siussa played a crowd favorite "Drinking Whisky".

For the grand finale of the show, Slick Shoes appeared in front of a less-than-full house, as most of people to see Three Bad Jacks did not stick around for the last band. But the SoCal punk band strived to please those who did stay. Performing classics "For Better, for Worse", "Parting Ways", and "Angel", but also new songs like "Darko" and "Now's the Time", Slick Shoes' set of songs is always dynamic. Also including a 7 Seconds cover of "Clench Fist, Black Eyes", lead singer Ryan Kepke seems to have the persona to get his listeners involved. I'm not sure if this common at all their shows, but the past two times I've seen the band Kepke has incited "the BRAVEHEART charge," separating the audience in two sides and having them charge into one another. After a few more huge circle pits and a rowdy fan being kicked out of the club, the show ended in an encore with "East on Tracks".

Slick Shoes continual touring has only helped them to become one of the best live bands on the circuit, and if Three Bad Jacks keeps up their showmanship, they could easily headline their own tour as well. Tokyo Rose and Still Life Projector have great potential, and I'd be willing to go see them again.

AVENGED SEVENFOLD SAOSIN A FALL FAREWELL MOMENTS IN GRACE HIDEKI

January 6, 2004 @ the Glass House (Pomona, CA)
By Jessica Rihal

I could waste your time and ramble on about how wonderful of a venue the Glass House is. There are so many things to love about this place, such as location, Taco Nazo, free parking, etc. So, when I have the chance to go there and see a less than then perfect band, I'm not too bummed out. I mean, after all, at least it was at the Glass House, right? These were my exact thoughts walking into the place halfway through opening band Hideki's set.

Hideki is one of those bands you've probably heard of through their link to another, more popular band. An overzealous attempt of a band that includes members of Atreyu, Hideki played their set unaffected by the crowds lack of enthusiasm. It's hard to put my finger on it, but a simple "they just didn't sound good live" sums it up. I searched the crowd for just one bobbing head, but came up empty-handed. Apparently I wasn't the only one not feeling Hideki tonight, and suddenly I didn't mind that I showed up close to the end of their set.

By the time the next band, Moments in Grace, took the stage I was feeling a little relieved, because I knew I was in for something better. Moments in Grace hail from Florida and include ex-members of As Friends Rust and Two-Thirty Eight. When these guys began playing, suddenly there were signs of life in the crowd. For an audience that seemed generally unaware of this band, they responded to Moments in Grace well. The band played a tight set of catchy emo-rock tunes from their latest EP, THESE DAYS WILL FADE, stopping only a few times to thank the other bands playing that night. Singer Jeremy Griffith's smooth voice was at its best during "Stratus", a mellow song that showcases Griffith's unusual yet satisfying voice. This band started off playing well, but the last few songs of their set sounded similar and blended together. Check out the

full-length THESE DAYS WILL FADE EP for free at www.momentsinrgrace.com.

A Fall Farewell was the next band to play. A surprisingly refreshing, five-piece melodic hardcore band from Orange County, CA, these guys are anything but typical. I know that may be hard to imagine with the latest plethora of hardcore bands that are currently on the loose. In all honesty, these boys don't even look the part—which is something to get excited about in itself. By this I mean that there was a serious lack of tight black T-shirts and black hair dye on stage. Instead, singer Jason Gallup opted for a white, long-sleeved, button-down shirt and khaki pants. These guys didn't stand still on the stage once from beginning to end. It was interesting to watch how they got into their music so vigorously. The warm response this band received only intensified after a short but sick metal instrumental halfway through their set. Intense drums and exciting guitar riffs helped the crowd's anticipation for A7X grow. A Fall Farewell played some songs off of their latest EP, THE IMPERMANENCE OF BEAUTY, as well as new material, including "Seven Seas", which is available on their site: www.afallfarewell.com.

Next were the show-stealers of the night, Saosin. If I had to put them into a category, I would label them "screamo." It isn't very often that I am able to say that a band sounded better live than on their CD, but for Saosin I can honestly say that this was the case. They took the stage and opened with "Lost Symphonies", the perfect show starter that begins with a strong, steady drumbeat. The energy never took a plunge from the start of Saosin's set until the very last song. Singer Anthony Green has unbelievable stage presence and seemed right at home on the stage, moving fluidly to the music and even stage-diving into the audience. The crowd loved Saosin's energy, shown via the number of kids crowd-surfing and singing along. You know you have something good when some clueless kid in the audience yells for you to play "Understanding in a Car Crash" or some other great song by another band.

Following Saosin's set, the sold-out venue rapidly began to heat up as the crowd buzzed in anticipation for Huntington Beach, CA's Avenged Sevenfold to play. After what seemed like an eternity, they finally took the stage. Like an explosion, Avenged opened with "Unholy Confessions", an intense song that got the crowd revved up. The crowd pulsed to heavy, dark tunes that included old favorite "We Come Out at Night", as well as newer songs off WAKING THE FALLEN. Avenged Sevenfold put on a decent show, considering the amount of touring these guys have been doing. I couldn't have expected a better performance. They played a good set that at times slightly lacked energy. It was pretty apparent that these guys were tired as hell, but they still gave it their all and played decently. Singer M. Shadows interacted freely with the audience and frequently gave the mic to ecstatic fans to finish lyrics. After the last song, the loyal audience demanded an encore and chanted "A7X" repeatedly, until the band revisited the stage and played "Eternal Rest" to close the show.

STRUNG OUT EIGHTEEN VISIONS THE KINISON

January 8, 2004 @ House of Blues (Hollywood, CA)
By Carley Charpentier

Walking in on a guy sexually arousing a crowd with his vocals and incredible stage presence is maybe not how I anticipated the concert beginning, but entertaining nonetheless. Not knowing what to expect from a band

following in the footsteps of the oh-so-trendy "THE" bands, I was more than amused and satisfied with the eccentric lead singer, a very topless drummer, and a guitar/bass combo vibrating the speakers. The Kinison began the lineup of musical entrees for the night and warmed the audience's palate with tunes like "Yeah Yeah Yeah". Their clear musical cohesion and ability to make the audience orgasm with every beat showcased some awesome talent. Talent which will surely be displayed on their upcoming tours with the likes of F-Minus and Poison the Well.

After my orgasm and cigarette, Eighteen Visions took the stage to add some sheer rage and intensity to the forum. Beginning their set with clips from the classic Nicholson flick THE SHINING more than pumped the crowd up and set the mood for some blood-racing chords. Lead singer James Hart emerged, arms spread eagle, princely as ever, with voice and band primed for the rocking. This Trustkill band slammed the audience with some sure-fire crowd-pleasers, and also threw out some new tunes from their new album OBSESSION (due out April 20, 2004). The fact that these guys tour and please crowds all over the place proves that, regardless of how many bands the guys take part in, if you can rock that hard, it's meant to be. Boasting members from bands like Death by Stereo and Throwdown, this band puts on one hell of a show and has a distinctive following of moshers wreaking some necessary havoc on the crowds. Not only does Eighteen Visions know how to begin a show, they also know how to deal with the very frequent technical difficulties faced during a live show. When frontman Hart swung the mic in a full circle for musical emphasis, the mic went flying, but he quickly covered it up, grabbed the guitarists back-up mic, and didn't even flinch. I want to commend the quick instincts, the killer sound, and the incredible cohesion of this band of rockers.

After a ridiculously long build-up and teasing of the crowd, Strung Out took the stage. As always, this band put on one stellar show. With the speakers at their max and the crowd still managing to scream louder, Strung Out played one of their most diverse set lists. Taking crowd-pleasers like "Virginia Madison" and tossing them in the mix with show rarities like "Wrong Side of the Tracks", the crew of Strung Out treated their fans to a revved-up set and one hell of a show. With the crowd getting rowdier and sweatier by the song, frontman Jason Cruz took a moment to commemorate the much-deserving drummer Jason Burns for having won the title of one of punk rock's best drummers, according to the people's pole in DRUM. Once the crowd paid their due respects, the show rocked on, continuously rewinding the crowd up for one kick-ass track after another. As the show wound down, the crowd wound up and refused to leave after the last song. With a little help from a rowdy crowd, the boys of Strung Out took to the stage again to encore with crowd-pleasers "Cult" and "Gearbox".

From the rowdy moshers to the double-duty encore, January 9th at the House of Blues couldn't have been better.

RILO KILEY LET'S GO SAILING FREEDOM PIGEON

January 10, 2004 @ the Troubadour (Hollywood, CA)
Text and Photos By Mindy Poder

When I arrived at the Troubadour about an hour-and-a-half early I did not expect the large lines that were already forming around the venue. The number of people willing to wait in the cold Hollywood weather clear-

ly illustrated the many devoted Rilo Kiley fans. With a swift tearing of the tickets and a number of messenger bag checks, the security guards let everyone in, and the sold-out show was quickly filled.

After a very short wait, let's go sailing humbly introduced themselves and began to enchant the audience with their songs. Like Rilo Kiley, let's go sailing is fronted by a female with a soft yet powerful voice. The lead singer introduced the band's song "Heart Condition" by saying it is a "song about being nervous," which triggered a few endearing laughs from the crowd. "Better Off" and "All I Want from You Is Love" were two of their better songs, both capturing the beautiful sounds of the cello. The band is composed of six talented men and

<RILO KILEY>



women (three of each).

Future Pigeon, a self-proclaimed "dub" band, proved to be a very unique group. The eight bandmembers swayed back and forth to their music, while some fans in the crowd were also hypnotically moving to the music. Their songs were filled with obscure instruments, but their long instrumentals seemed to drag on, making their songs seem very repetitive. Later on in the night, Blake Sennet (guitarist for Rilo Kiley) said that

<FUTURE PIGEON>



many of the members of Future Pigeon came from a band called Whisky Biscuit, the first band for which Rilo Kiley ever opened.

After the Troubadour's lights dimmed, Jenny Lewis and Blake Sennet made their way onto the stage. Jenny (who sings, plays guitar, and plays keyboard) began to speak into the microphone but was shocked, so she found

something in her bag to "protect" her and placed it over the microphone. She apologized to her fans, but no one seemed to mind; instead, everyone was very excited to witness some of Jenny's charm. After Blake teased his female counterpart, the band began to play my personal favorite, "A Better Son/Daughter". The song reached new emotional heights because of the clear vocals and the intensity of the acoustics. They then proceeded to play "Go Ahead", the first track from TAKE OFFS AND LANDINGS. Lewis apologized for missing a verse in the song, yet she and Blake seemed quite happy to be playing and continually thanked the fans for coming to the concert. In exchange for each small flaw was a raw intensity that proved that the duo genuinely cared about their music. Many surprise guests appeared throughout the set. During "Hail to Whatever You Found in the

<LET'S GO SAILING>



Sunlight That Surrounds You", Jiha Lee (the flutist from the album) joined a smiling Blake and a friendly Jenny. During my personal favorite part of the set, "With Arms Outstretched", also off of their latest album, THE EXECUTION OF ALL THINGS, a number of friends of Rilo Kiley came on the stage. One of these friends was Mike Mogis, a producer and one of the important figures at Saddle Creek Records. Soon after reciting the line "Don't fool yourself in thinking you're more than a man / 'Cause you'll probably end up dead" to another surprise guest, Rilo Kiley drummer Jason Boesel, Jenny seemed to get closer and closer to me. To my surprise and delight, she stepped off the stage and finished the song in the crowd. Because she sang directly into my face, I became as giddy as a little girl who just found out her parents bought her a pony. I was hardly aware of my surroundings, and I fumbled with my camera because of my lack of composure. The intimacy of the set was amazing, and the awe of the fans seemed to reach new levels, with many excited girls and boys trying to touch their favorite singer. Later, Jenny said she really liked how Pedro the Lion had a question time in their set, and so she proceeded to ask the audience if they had any questions. One girl had a question that was more of a request: for the band to sing their friend "Happy Birthday to You". The band, being extremely thoughtful, invited the girl onto the stage and serenaded her. Another question had Blake describing his experiences on the Nickelodeon sitcom SALUTE YOUR SHORTS, where he proclaimed that food-fight scenes were the worst and that Nickelodeon does not pay very generously. Someone else asked what the name of the band meant, and Jenny proceeded to give a very ambiguous answer touching on a dream of Blake's, an old man, and the predicted date of Jenny's death. Since the band had played five new songs during the set, a fan asked when the expected date of the new album would be, to which the band replied that it should arrive in

May or June. During the encore, the twosome played both "Spectacular Views", but they decided to put a twist on the songs. Blake sang the "spectacular views" line that Jenny normally sings and vice-versa. This "gimmick" (as Blake described it) was just one of the many special treats fans were lucky enough to experience during the show.

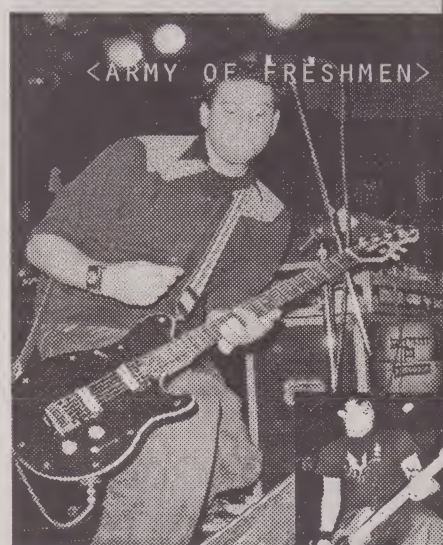
THE MATCHES HALIFAX THE HIGHER ARMY OF FRESHMEN

January 13, 2004 @ the Troubadour
(Santa Monica, CA)

Review and photos by Annette Ovanessian

As I was driving down "rainbow village" on Santa Monica Blvd., my girlfriend and I turned our heads into a club called Mickey's to witness a gay man shaking his beautifully round, perky ass on top of the bar. Laughing hysterically, I was swerving into the other lane. I guess that sort of kinky shit is tolerable at that venue...but a

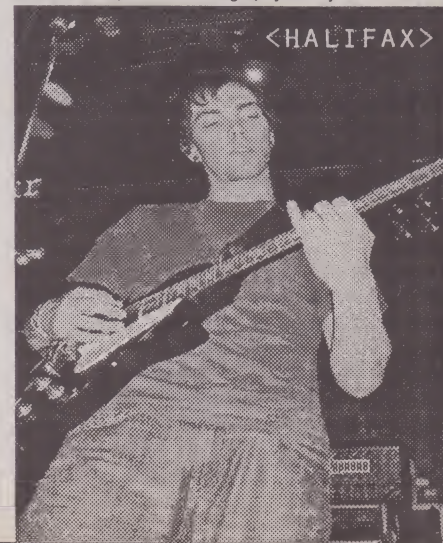
<ARMY OF FRESHMEN>



block away at the Troubadour, it would not be tolerated.

As I walked in the doors of the show, Army of Freshmen were already into their set. I easily moved through the crowd to the front of the stage, where I began taking my pictures. It was really hard to get a good picture of the singer because he kept on moving around the small stage like there was somewhere to go, but I'm sure that was his way of hyping up the small crowd. With painted nails and perfect choreography, Army of Freshmen

<HALIFAX>



took me by surprise. Honestly, I didn't know any of the bands that were playing this night, so, fortunately, I was impressed with the great professionalism displayed by the first group up. Both musically upbeat and with the lyrics and background singers on point, Army of Freshmen took their underground title and raised it up a notch. All the band members were working together on stage with the same amount of passion for their music. Using two keyboard players and a mini Moog really enhanced their sound. During the middle of the



show, I took the band outside to the corner of Santa Monica and Doheny, where I took some band shots. There were a few cars honking as they were driving by. I was happy to hear that they were really enthusiastic about SKRATCH MAGAZINE coming out to review their performance, but they're just lucky I enjoyed their music! Visit www.armyoffreshmen.com to purchase their self-titled record. Surely you won't be disappoint-



ed.

I went to the show with a friend of mine who is not that fond of punk-rock music, so I kind of felt bad that I dragged her along. She didn't hesitate to let me know she was bored, either, but at this point there was nothing I could do about it. (She's going to kill me when she reads this!) I noticed that the stage was now filled with a group full of shaggy-haired men who are a rock band from Las Vegas, The Higher, who were so excited to play the Troubadour. Unfortunately, they did not have much of a gathering in front of them. As soon as Army of Freshmen left the stage, so did some of the audience.

I was not too thrilled with their style of music and style of fashion, so I really don't have much to say about them. I know they have an EP called STAR IS DEAD. I couldn't find a Website where you could check them out yourselves, but you can visit www.fiddlerrecords.com if you're still interested in learning out their record.

Did you know that there is a city in Nova Scotia called Halifax? and that there is a local band here in Los Angeles called Halifax, too? The relation? I don't know, but it must be a depressing city, because these true-to-heart emo guys knew exactly how to belt out all their frustrations on the mic. Frontman Mike was jumping on the side fixtures of the stage and throwing himself to the floor in complete rage against I don't know what. I couldn't really understand what he was saying, but, from the looks of his performance, he was either mad about something in his life or just a completely goofy guy. They have a CD out on No Milk Records called A WRITERS REFERENCE.

Now, on with the juicy side of the whole night! The Matches is a band that just got signed to Epitaph and has a really good-looking singer. I mean, his fashion sense is really weird, but his face is really HOT! (Oh, I forgot to mention that the guys from Army of Freshmen were hot, too!) But above all, The Matches really did a good job with my first impression—and it's not because the guy is hot. Okay, well, maybe it is, but I did notice that all of a sudden everyone was singing along and that there were more people in the audience. The Matches' drummer was off the hook, getting crazy on the drums, and both the bass player and the solo guitarist were parading around on stage with chaotic energy. One thing I wasn't too pleased about was that the solo guitar player was spitting on the stage repeatedly. I'm sure the clean-up guy did not enjoy tiptoeing over someone's nasty, uncalled-for spit, but I guess that's his way of looking cool or something.

The Matches is a band that just got signed to Epitaph and has a really good-looking singer. I mean, his fashion sense is really weird, but his face is really HOT! (Oh, I forgot to mention that the guys from Army of Freshmen were hot, too!) But above all, The Matches really did a good job with my first impression—and it's not because the guy is hot. Okay, well, maybe it is, but I did notice that all of a sudden everyone was singing along and that there were more people in the audience. The Matches' drummer was off the hook, getting crazy on the drums, and both the bass player and the solo guitarist were parading around on stage with chaotic energy. One thing I wasn't too pleased about was that the solo guitar player was spitting on the stage repeatedly. I'm sure the clean-up guy did not enjoy tiptoeing over someone's nasty, uncalled-for spit, but I guess that's his way of looking cool or something.

So this is how it went: Army of Freshmen were great, The Higher and Halifax did not make my cut, but The Matches did. Now, it was 11 p.m., and my friend and I went to a much better show that evening in Las Palmas to see 45 King and DJ Nu-Mark rock the turntables.

FALLING CYCLE SCARS OF TOMORROW xDEATHSTARx SUICIDE SILENCE

January 16, 2004 @ Showcase Theatre (Corona, CA)
By Luke Skywalker and Johnny Rocket

Making the trek out to Corona during rush hour is not very sensible, especially when you're going to a concert

with no guarantee of a getting in. Yet, there we were on the 91 freeway in bumper-to-bumper traffic. After surpassing the long line of vehicles heading out to God knows where, we parked, made our way to the door, and came upon a sold-out venue. Attempting to act like the professionals we aren't and fumbling our words, we actually managed to get our pretty little stamps so we could get inside for free.



Suicide Silence had three songs left when we made it through the horde of people to the balcony. A nice pit was going, so I assume the band had somewhat of an ability to rock. With a semi grind/metal sound, the lead singer belted out possessed vocals that would have frightened even our governor. To our discontent, all the sweating kids below created a crusty combination of smells that included pizza, French fries, herbal essence, and urinal cakes. Individually, all these fragrances can



be refreshing, but together they form noxious fumes that words can't quite describe. Thankfully, Suicide Silence finished—and, for the time being, so did our nausea.

xDEATHSTARx swarmed the stage eight men strong under the cover of darkness. Seconds later, they laid down a barrage of contagious hardcore anthems, which didn't catch the crowd off guard at all. The sea of people (comprised mostly of hardcore/metal kids clad in tight black shirts) was well aware of what was to come. The dance floor was cleared out, while the front of the stage became a storm of fists and screams. xDEATHSTARx is a relatively new band, only having a demo EP titled BEWARE OF DEATHSTAR. Even so, they have been hammering out local shows like nobody's

business and seem to get bigger by the moment. They assaulted everyone with such songs as "Bullet",



"Represent", and "Die to Remain", all of which can be



found on their EP. They are a straight-edge band and not afraid to admit it. They also didn't forget their signature crowning of championship mosh belt. I'm not entirely sure, but I believe the guy who won the belt that night had jumped off from the second deck and gave a shake to the lights hanging from the roof before he came crashing down on the heads and necks of innocent bystanders. A good time was had by all, to



say the least.

Another flush of smells made their way through the crowd to us as we waited for Scars of Tomorrow. What we thought was a bad smell before was now indescribable. You can't smell words, so they invariably fall far short of describing the horrible reality of it. But I digress, and I will try to describe the band. With what seemed like a short set, Scars of Tomorrow commanded the crowd with songs such as "Design Fate", "This Autumns Bleeding", and "Vengeance". Interlacing both hardcore and metal, the Orange County quintet prides itself in their live performance—and this desire to please a crowd was exhibited. Though I observed a few scuffles amongst the hardcore kids in the pit, I spent a majority the set swaying with crowd in an attempt to re-position myself in the club. Besides Scars of Tomorrow's crowd appeal, their attitude toward both fans and their fellow musicians was apparent. Several times lead singer Mike Milford gave his respect to headliners Falling Cycle, and after the concert he graciously gave out demos that included "Abandonment" and "Suffocating Words".

Everything seems like an eternity when you are rubbing shoulders with the drenched dance-floor veterans waiting for the final and most-exciting band of the night...especially when the aroma around you can be likened to that of rotting used baby diapers. Falling Cycle brought a cleansing smile of relief to my face when they were ready to introduce themselves for, unfortunately, the last time. If you weren't paying attention, that means that this was their final show together as a band. Now, before you go and get all emo-core, let me tell you how impressive their final performance was. Falling Cycle has been churning out the metal-influenced hardcore (or maybe hardcore-influenced metal) for a good number of years. There was always something that set them apart from other bands in the same genre, especially before it was REALLY cool to play metal-core. I can't quite explain it, but their music seems to rise above the clichéd attempts of others. Anyways, they laid down a maddening set, including my two favorite songs, "Rose Adore" and "Hearts Turn Black". The madness filtered through the air and into the lungs of just about every person present. The boys and girls were slamming in the pit, a brave few attempted the great art of head-walking, while others dive-bombed from above. This show was definitely up there in my list of outstanding crowd participation. It ended with half of the kids either standing or being tread upon on stage and trying desperately to rip the microphone from each other's hands. Then it was over, with the echo of 300 voices lifted high and left to ring out through the black walls. It was quickly followed by the cries of "one more song!" The only bad part was all those rowdy kids on stage had broken one of the guitarist's amp head...and that is how it ended. Farewell, Falling Cycle.

RECOVER THE BLED NAME TAKEN IN CASE OF FIRE

January 17, 2004 @ Chain Reaction (Anaheim, CA)
By Chris Hendrickson

As the impatient crowd of kids filed into the musty room in Chain Reaction, you could immediately sense the excitement growing in each and every person who was in the building. And after In Case of Fire left the stage, the excitement only grew. Straight out of Encino, CA, In Case of Fire was nothing short of a shock to everyone, and with each of the band mem-

bers not being a day over 15, they were a pleasant surprise to everyone. The singer's high-pitched voice was soothing in a way, and the guitarist's antics were always fun to watch. They played about 25 minutes of catchy indie rock (including songs from their demo, YOUR MOM) that had feet stomping and heads bobbing. In five years, In Case of Fire's record will be spinning in CD players everywhere (well, it will be in mine, at least).

After the onslaught of In Case of Fire's melodies and harmonies, Name Taken was ready to rock—and rock they did. They are one of the most amazing and underrated bands on the face of planet, but trust me, they will not stay that way for long after their full-length hits stores April 13. After watching these guys play Blink-182 covers at school assemblies, I can't help but smile every time they start playing. The set consisted of four amazing new songs (all of which will be on the upcoming record) and three classic hits: "A Year Spent Cold", "Today", and "Magnolia". When you look to the left, you see Ryan Edwards going as crazy as humanly possible. When you look to the right, you can't help but hear Blake Means throwing down the catchiest fills known to man. In the middle of the madness, Chad Atkinson is dancing around and singing the words that almost all of the sold-out crowd knew by heart. As soon as they started to play "Magnolia", the crowd erupted into a sea of mashed bodies and raised hands singing along to an amazing song by one of the best bands in the music industry today.

People came out from the shadows, emerging from places I never knew existed, rushing in from the outside patio, pushing and shoving so they could all be up close to witness The Bled. The Bled's newest record, PASS THE FLASK, is one of the most brilliantly-produced records of all time. It is filled with unbelievable breakdowns, incredible guitar riffs, and a seemingly flawless chemistry between all five people in the band, earning them the nickname "The Shred". As soon as their first song, "Red Wedding", was over, every kid near the stage was panting, sweating, and left begging for more—and they got just that. The lead singer is one of the most active stage performers I have ever seen, covering ground on the stage, in the pit, and across the barriers to the side of the stage. Every breakdown that they played resulted in a sea of hardcore dancing, with fists flying and feet kicking, and every chorus that they belted out erupted into one of the most massive sing-alongs I have ever seen. If you haven't seen The Bled before, you haven't experienced life, and I suggest you see them very, very soon.

When I saw the kids filing out the door one by one, I couldn't help but feel sad, being that Recover is one of my favorite bands. Initially, I expected their performance to be less than par, mainly because of the lack of crowd support, but it was exactly the opposite. It's like Recover fed off the challenge of winning over supporters, and, after playing songs from both of their records, CECI N'EST PAS RECOVER and RODEO AND PICASSO, they did just that. When they went straight into their first song, "Pardon the Wait", got the loyal few up in the front singing along to every word and set the stage for the rest of their set. Their songs have a classic-rock feel to them but with a more hardcore edge, and a few songs into their set there was finally a little movement among the crowd. Recover's screaming verses followed up by their catchy choruses provide for absolutely amazing and well thought-out songs. Lead guitarist and singer Dan Keyes has a knack for getting the fans into it by hovering over them with the microphone and screaming along with them. They played three new songs (including "Simple" and

"Fuck Me for Free"), all of which were equally awesome. Overall, they put on a great show.

As I walked out the door of Chain Reaction sweaty, tired, and thirsty, I realized that In Case of Fire, Name Taken, The Bled, and Recover put on one of the great shows I have ever been to.

LIMBECK ROCKY VOTOLATO THE PALE THE PLUS ONES THE ENERGY

January 24, 2004 @ Chain Reaction (Anaheim, CA)

By Tiffany Chow

Photos by Eric Lawson

As it seems most shows go, Chain Reaction was quite empty when I first arrived. I was a bit late because I failed to notice that tonight's show started half an hour early. It's a good thing it did start early, as each band put on great and substantial sets. The night's highly energetic vibe was mostly incited and maintained by the bands whose enthusiasm to perform seeped into the crowd and made for a really fun show.

I arrived just in time to catch the last song of The Energy, a quartet from nearby. I knew that this band received a lot of support from Greene Records, and it is no surprise why. Without trying to sound clichéd, The Energy played highly energetic pop/rock. Their sound was in a way very advanced and unique. Unlike most other cutting-edge bands who sacrifice approachability for innovation, they were able to still produce a sound that was catchy and likeable. As for stage presence, the three members in front did produce an acceptable amount of movement, but the drummer kept his gaze down at his drums (or the ground) the entire time. Overall, they were really good.

Sometime between The Energy leaving the stage and the next act, The Plus Ones, taking it, more people streamed into the venue. Despite the large amount of people that helped set up for the next set, The Plus Ones frontman Joel performed an acoustic set, because

the rest of his band was unable to make it. What would seem to be a discouraging circumstance Joel turned into a positive and enthusiastic performance, enlisting the help of Patrick from Limbeck for his set. Playing a sound that fit in nicely with the folk/power pop/rock theme of the night, Joel put on quite a performance. Opening with "Serve in Heaven, Rule in Hell", throwing in a song about Internet site Friendster, and closing with a romping rendition of Outkast's "Hey Ya", he was able to keep the crowd interested and enjoying themselves through his entire set. For his last song (the Outkast cover), he brought on stage members from Limbeck, The Pale, and recruited the dancing skills of Limbeck's merch guy.

It became clear that the reason so many people had been on stage to help set up for The Plus Ones was because The Pale had wisely used his set-up time to set up all of THEIR gear, which fortunately made for a short hiatus between their sets. By this time, Chain Reaction had become pretty packed. Hailing from the Seattle area and having recently signed to Anaheim-based label SideCho, you could tell there were quite a few people there to somewhat welcome the band to their other "home." All members sported Limbeck shirts, displaying what seemed to be a really strong sense of friendship between the touring bands. They performed impeccably, with so much energy the crowd couldn't



help but share their enthusiasm. In addition to playing songs off of their newest release, GRAVITY GETS THINGS DONE, they covered a Police song, bringing the song to life in a monumental and moving way. Their sound was crisp and sharp, producing live performances that almost overshadowed the recorded versions. Closing with arguably their most catchy and poppy song "Wake-Up Call", they brought on Patrick from Limbeck to help, with Gabe (lead singer) announcing, "This song's a party!" Proving the statement true, the energy on stage intensified, and a train of dancers thread throughout the crowd.

I feel bad for any acoustic singer/songwriters who have to "keep on keepin' on" in the wake of Dashboard Confessional's Chris Carabba. Rocky Votolato restores hope to the genre with refreshing style and taste. Unlike Carabba's seeming weakness, Rocky's personality as portrayed in his music and lyrics is much more raw and strong. With a voice much more approachable than Carabba's high-pitched wails, he is able to pull off a more folk sound, also utilizing the help of a harmonica in doing so. You can tell he is much more of a man

than Carabba, as well, with more daring lyrics and a stronger sense of genuine storytelling in his songs. Besides, he was wearing an Against Me! shirt, which is as far from "emo" as anyone can get. I am sure he is sick of being compared to Dashboard, but in my opinion it is by comparison that his best qualities shine through—and he more clearly comes out on top.

Even though each opening band stood on its own with impressive performances, they truly did just serve as opening bands for Limbeck. They came on stage declaring themselves "from the O.C." and opening with a song they described as being "about the city of Orange." We've all listened to music that makes us feel a certain way, but never have I come into contact with a band that does this more completely and successfully than Limbeck. Their newest album HI, EVERYTHING'S GREAT in its entirety is able to draw the listener in and infuses her with a sense of nostalgia. Each song they played from this album made me want to remember something—even if there was nothing to remember. They played with enthusiasm and excitement, as well, and seemed genuinely glad to be playing their music together. They were a perfect end to a really fun evening.

THE APPLESEED CAST PELICAN THE COUGARS CHIN UP CHIN UP

January 24, 2004 @ the Metro (Chicago, IL)

Text and Photos By Jonathan Willoughby



Cold air has become my friend. Usually around this time in Chicago me and the cold get to know each other very well. My old-school Vans high tops do nothing to stop my toes from near frostbite, nor does the sleek, black windbreaker I threw on while running out the door. Soon, though, I will be inside the Metro. The legendary club will cure my case of the chills and give me what I dearly want: warmth and a lineup of bands I have been waiting weeks to see.



add a great charge to the band. It gave me greater appreciation for the band Chicago when I hear "9 to 5 or 6 to 4". Ask your uncle who plays guitar and is always holding a Pabst—he knows what's up. The Cougars couldn't play a long-enough set. By the time they were done, I was still hyped up and ready for more. They rocked their asses off on stage, and the crowd was into it. A great band to see live, if you ever get the chance.

I knew I was going to like Pelican. Was it because the

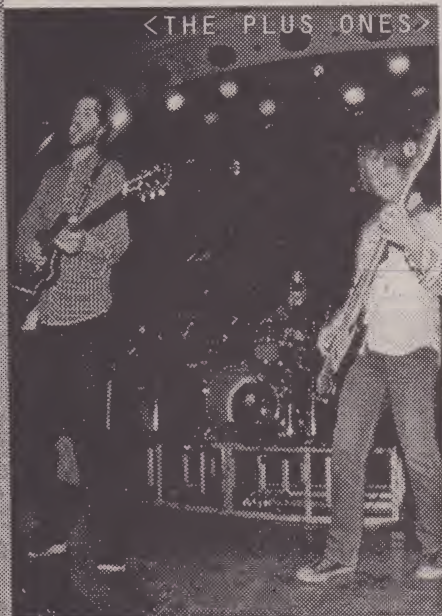
something different in a sea of bands who call them-

<THE APPLESEED CAST>



singer while setting up was signing along to "Don't Fear the Reaper"? Or was it the double-bass drum kit that looked like he practices "Master of Puppets" by Metallica every day? I think not only these, but also

<THE PLUS ONES>



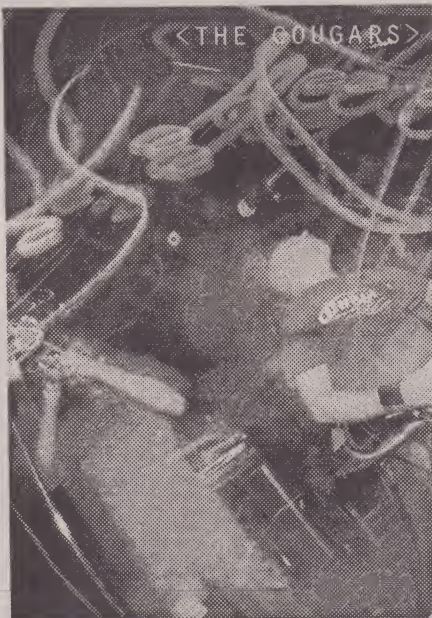
their love of metal made me fall for them. Pelican is an instrumental metal band. No Slayer type screams, but the chug of classic metal is well intact. What seemed like on big song lasted the whole set. From guitar solos to some slow, rock-out parts, you can tell these guys did their homework. The drummer went in for the kill a couple times with some phenomenal kickdrum work that left me speechless. I really like this band. They are

<PELICAN>



selves metal to be funny. Yeah, I'm talking to you kid, the one in the Iron Maiden shirt. Put back on your vanity hoodie and give it a rest—that haircut is already way too funny.

<THE COUGARS>



Oh, The Appleseed Cast. I will write your review as if I am writing a love letter to my girlfriend back in the '20s. Though I was quite iffy about seeing you play live, I must say that I was impressed. You had the crowd in the palm of your hand from the first note on. Everyone had one thing on their mind, and that was to hear you play. Your songs were uplifting with a fun rock side. Though you didn't move around much, you still knew how to get reactions from people. I liked how kids sang along to your songs and cheered when you played one they loved. I must say, I had a wonderful time during your set. Hopefully soon we will meet again, if only to enjoy the time we rock out together!

As the night ended and my great friend Rob and I left the show, we were met by the cold again. Our faces nearly blasted off we walked to the car talking about the night. All the bands were great in each of their own ways. This was the kind of show you look back on and are glad you went to.

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HEY! HEY! WE'RE THE UK!

all reviews written by United Kingdom correspondent, Mathew Hocking

EIGHTY SIX ARMY OF CATS BOMBED OUT

Encased in super cool luminous orange packaging ARMY OF CATS is the third release from Leeds-based punkers Eighty Six, and it certainly sees them mark out their own territory in the field of punky post-rock. Taking their cue from the likes of Girls Against Boys and Hot Snakes, Eighty Six carve out a sound that harks back to the rough-hewn melodies of those great mid-'90s melodic punk bands, a time when an album was able to grow on you over time and unveil some sparkling, Walkman-hogging tunes as a result. Add to that some nice post-rock angularity, and ARMY OF CATS is such an album. Just check out the blazing "Stranger Danger!" or the beautifully abrasive closer "Phantom Limb" for size! www.bombdout.com

SUPERYOB GHETTO BLASTER SELF-RELEASED

Pledging allegiance to a '70s pub-rock style of punk, Superyob present an album full of harmless sing-along "anthems" and odes to good old-fashioned rock 'n' roll, all soaked in the working-class life of the proletariat. The "street-rock-meets-Slade" description in their biography pretty much gives their game away, but songs like "Kids Are Alright" with its "Mods and skins and punks / Do they still know how to fight" lines invoke something of a Brit-punk nostalgia trip that underlies this album. Overall, this is an alright example of first-generation punks keeping the dream alive and well through a basic punk-rock style. www.superyob.com

SNUFF GREASY HAIR MAKES MONEY 10 PAST 12

Hurrah! Snuff are back with a follow-up to the infamous POTATOES AND MELONS cover album that inspired countless other acts to spice up karaoke classics in a punk-rock style. But don't get too excited, as GREASY HAIR... does pale somewhat compared to the quality displayed on that aforementioned album. It starts off promising enough, with an awesome cover of "The Sound of the Underground" by U.K. POP IDOL winners Girls Aloud (who, I have to admit, had some pretty good songs), but somewhere in the middle it just starts to get...well, a bit boring; and The Toys' "A Lovers' Concerto" (covered to save it from becoming a KFC advert) and Bob Dylan's "You're a Big Girl Now" just don't seem suited to punk rock. That said, "O Sakana Tengoku" (a Japanese sing-along about eating fish and staying healthy and intelligent), "Let the Music Play" by Shannon, and "Planet Rock" by Africa Bambaata are just pure Snuff quality! www.10past12records.com

VARIOUS MAKING IT UP AS WE GO ALONG BIG SCARY MONSTERS

Although Big Scary Monsters have a proclivity for whiny emo pop—which takes up a little too much of the space on this sampler—there are some moments of brilliance here, as well, such as The Next Autumn Soundtrack's wistful indie ambience and Fog Donkey's obtuse indie-punk. Thankfully, by the time you get to The Plot to Blow Up the Eiffel Tower, things really heat up, their frenetic rock 'n' roll jazz/blues stomp delivering oddly-placed yet passionately-driven female squeals behind an unrestrained male vocal attack. This before the math-core madness of Emotive Exposed, whose vocalist sounds like a madman running amok through the minds of Every Time I Die before spewing his rabid, disease-ridden

guts over a scorching web of hardcore catharsis. The Dudley Corporation's brief, bleepy interlude is a nice precursor to Pictures Paint Words' scuzzy post-hardcore, leaving The Remarkable Rocket to finish the disc off with some acoustic melancholia. An eclectic compilation for eclectic minds. www.bsmrocks.com
-Mathew Hocking

FLAILING WAIL MAY THE OFFICER FALL FIRST EP POISONED WHISKY

They might not have the best of names, but give them a chance and Flailing Wail show off some interesting ideas on this debut EP of theirs. But while the ideas are there, the coherency isn't; and trying to get those ideas across with a patchy production job doesn't help things, either. Opening track "Willow Wired Woe" starts off promisingly enough, vocalist Dave's golden voice radiating with a lovely Welsh charm (well, they ARE supposed to have the best voices in the world), brushing against a nice emo-rock bounce, but it sadly builds into some trashy guitar-led racket with some similarly horrible cymbals smashing the song to bits. And as for that double-bass pedal, I just wanna grab it and lamp the drummer 'round the head with it! Given a little nurturing, these songs could be seriously good stuff, but right now I guess there's some work to be done. www.poisoned-whiskyrecords.com

THE 9INE SOMNAMBALLISTICS BLACK PHOENIX

Resonating with an awe-inspiring songwriting intelligence, The 9ine should be the biggest band in the world right now. Quite why these relative unknowns aren't is an absolute mystery, because SOMNAMBALLISTICS is an audacious and thoroughly disparate opus that SHOULD be sending shockwaves through the rock world. Incorporating the spacey prog-rock of Muse and Cave In with the post-rock stoner grooves of Acrimony (guitarist Mead's previous band), these songs are built on the most precarious of dynamics. A song like "The Ballad of Addled Samuel and Jerusalem" modelling itself on some wonderfully uplifting A Perfect Circle-isms, while "All That I Know" is a gorgeously poppy number enriched with a soulful Brit-pop edge that makes it just about the most perfect carefree pop/rock song I've heard in recent years. Alongside the heart-stirring melancholia of "Icarus Jones"—complete with soaring strings—this is a magnificent, highly dextrous album that will have you playing it over and over and over again! Absolutely essential.

PART CHIMP BRING BACK THE SOUND EP ROCK ACTION

Following on from their brilliant debut album CHART PIMP, "Bring Back the Sound" is an enticing taster of things to come from these London rockers. Evidently wielding a more accessible beast than the cacophonous din that was their previous incarnations Penthouse and Ligament, Part Chimp are an intriguing bunch. Their sound verges on the distorted distortions of The Butthole Surfers whilst swaggering around the reckless contortions of Minus' white noise. B-side "Hitlers and Jews" (from their debut album) flourishes with a dumb sort of intelligence; a pummelling slab of abrasive discordant trash that sounds like 12 Rods had they laid off the clean jazz and concentrated on ingesting those crushing Sabbathian riffs. Their forthcoming album should be released in the states on Monitor. You'd do well to be prepared. www.rockactionrecords.co.uk, www.partchimp.com

DEATHWITCH VIOLENCE BLASPHEMY SODOMY WICKED WORLD

Sounding like Brummie sludge-core arsonists Mistress resurrecting the felid, maggot-ridden corpse of thrashers Hard to Swallow, Deathwitch are probably the most uncompromising stoner-death band I've ever encountered! Taking death-metal to its darkest, doomiest, most barbaric roots, stripping it of its pretentious, note-perfect virtuosity, and force-feeding it some of the most brutal sludge riffs known to man and beast, Deathwitch play it how it was always meant to be: nihilistic, heavy as fuck, and delivered with all the subtlety of a cruise missile slamming into a children's hospital in Baghdad! Proclaiming themselves "blasphemous Neanderthal warriors who don't give a fuck about giving a fuck," you sense that underneath the primitive slop 'n' roll riffs and vile lyrics there might be a tiny hint of humour to all this...which is what makes it such a superb album. Songs like "Necrosodomizer", "Bitch Finder", and "Coffin Fornicator" ensure that this is a veritable feast of filthy death-metal malevolence. www.earache.com

PALE HORSE GEE THAT AINT SWELL DRY RUN RECORDINGS

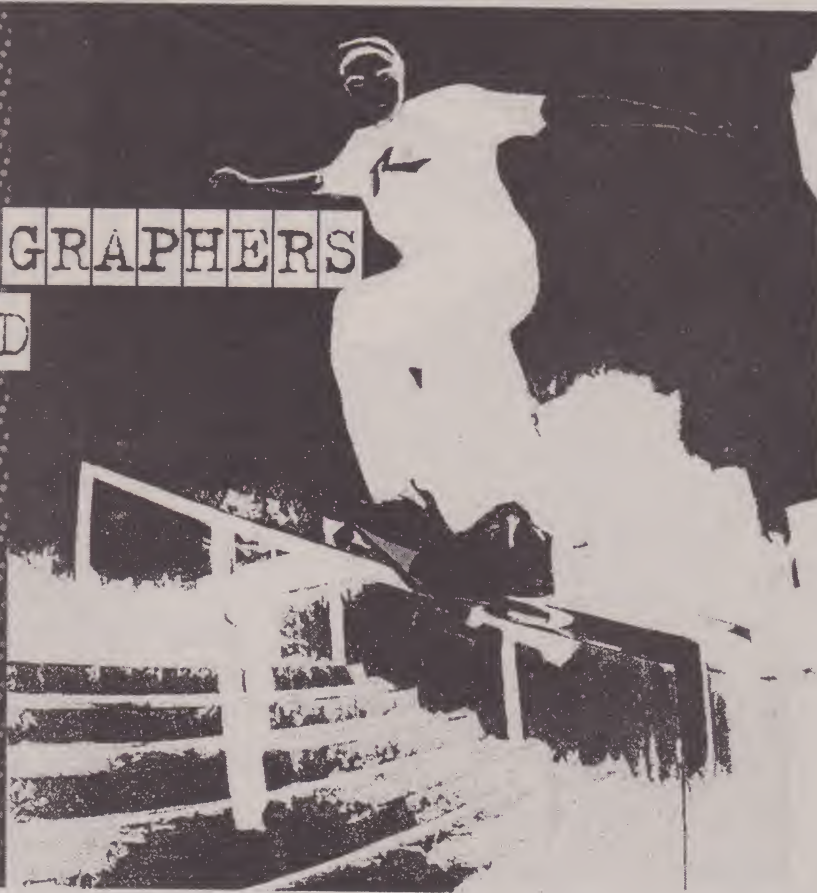
Pissing on the rule book marked "bowel-loosening sludge rock," Pale Horse really are a breath of fresh air. GEE THAT AINT SWELL kicks off with four minutes of bass feedback entitled "Bliss", before the painfully slow "Yes I Do Own Clothes", the song plodding along like a huge behemoth creeping over the horizon. Throughout the album, just about any semblance of structure is absolutely decimated, as they shift and slide from low-end sludge through to some really quite spectacular art-core instrumentation, as exemplified well in "Holy Trinity Church Student Bar", the song morphing skillfully from thundering riffage to a mid-paced ambience, building up a crescendo of beautiful but still quite unsettling bass and vocal harmonies with startling results. You'd best throw all your preconceptions of what is possible with heavy rock out of the window, because this is left-field sludge at its most disturbing. www.dryrun.net

THE MURDER OF ROSA LUXEMBURG EVERYONE'S IN LOVE AND FLOWERS PICK THEMSELVES UNDERGROOVE

An emancipatory concept album, EVERYONE'S IN LOVE... tells the story of an old man called Victor who, after shutting himself off from society so that he can take on the role of God himself and avoid the concept of Death, encounters a giant cat and a giant dog in his head, who proceed to battle it out for his sanity. And if you thought that was weird, you should HEAR them. EVERYONE'S IN LOVE... is a schizophrenic roller-coaster ride of an album twisting and turning through some incredibly campy and quirky spazz-rock that comes off like The Blood Brothers in a scrap with Milwaukee mentalists. Since by Man! And even then, you're still nowhere near their frantic, avant-garde style. While their more erratic moments can get a little disjointed at times, The Murder of... are still a spectacularly original band worthy of investigation. www.themurderof.co.uk, www.undergroove.co.uk

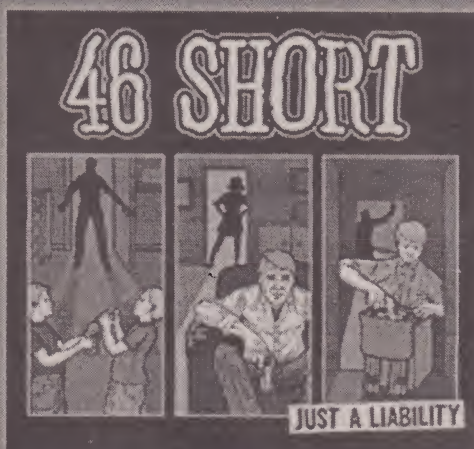
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Billy Club Sandwich

The long awaited follow up to 2001's "Superheroes at Leisure." BCS are back with a vengeance. "Chin Music" is a hardcore masterpiece offering up ten tracks plus plenty of extras. So step to the plate and let these ten year vets of the NYHC scene show you what hardcore is all about. For fans of Madball, Sworn Enemy, Subzero, and Bridge 9 bands.



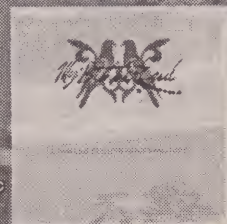
Also available

This music hits your ears like a sledgehammer and is not for the faint of heart. - Decoymusic.com

My Bitter End

If your looking for the next best thing to compliment your Lamb of God and Red Chord CDs then pick this up. - Smother.net

My Bitter End's debut album "A Thin Line Between Heaven and Here" is a brutal onslaught of musical styles. This album is comprised of vicious vocals, grind, death, hardcore, and all out metal to catchy harmonies, double bass poundings, and pit inciting breakdowns. Their songs range from technical to melodic to just plain brutal. For fans of BTBAM and The Red Chord.



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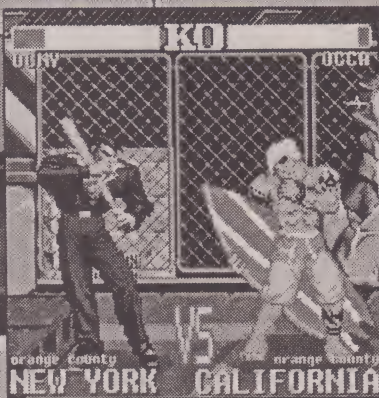
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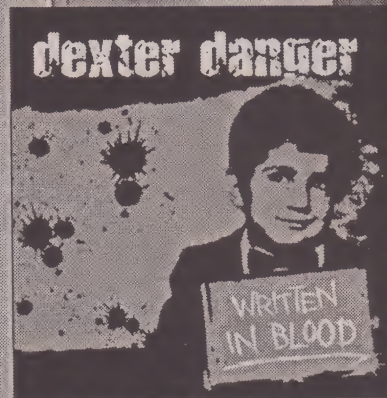
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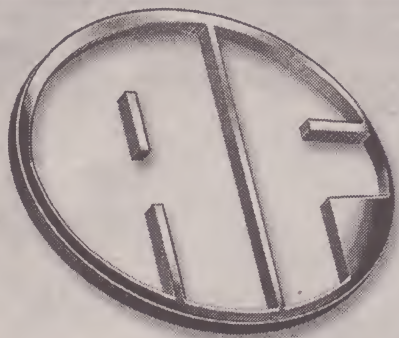
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LP: VR1216
CD: VRCD16

on this record there are his 5 singles he put out on Q records in New Mexico 1958-63, they are pure rock'n'roll and some ballads to... on the 60's recordings he even has a farisa organ, then you here super cool raw live recordings from new Orleans with screaming loud crowd and chicks go berserk, you have some radio interviews when he played in mexico that days and some outtakes and demonstration records... the sound on the tapes where super bad but our mastering guy did a great job and we can stand behind this record for a fantastic wild 50's sound... jerry j Nixon died end of 1999 and here his first!!! full length album full of 50's rock'n'roll, he was a fantastic song writer and one of the greatest unknown heros or rock'n'roll...

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THE COME N' GO
'Rhythm n' blood'
LP: VR1218
CD: VRCD18

It's A Rhythm and Blues Explosion from this 4 swiss pissed off end time rock'n'roll teenagers, WITH absolutely out of control singer crawling on the floor falls in to the drum kid yells screams

and what ever you think he could do... he does... pure no poser rock'n'roll... to much drugs and alcohol... for this record they asked Rober Butler to record it, they went to the Ruy and the Devils Motorcycle room and recorded it in one week, it's all very raw no maddies at all just a crazy fucked up mix between the Cramps and the Oblivians BUT ON SPEED... the album starts off with jimmy reads classic 'baby what's wrong' and after that it's a train to a land you never been before, this is R&B played by teens for a new generation.!!!!



THE GET LOST WATZLOVES DEAD BROTHERS

ZENO TORNADO & THE BONEY GOOGLE BROTHERS
'Dirty Dope Infected Blue Grass Hillbilly Hobo XXX Country Music'
LP: VR1219
CD: VRCD19

this is dirty dirty country music from a man who saw the dark side of live who went to the pit and to hell and came back... now for the first time in the world history of Dirty Country Zeno Tornado and his Pats the Boney Google Brothers let you some stories about the sick side of live about Drug Abusing Weird Sex Games and Violence... everything in a Fantastic Blue Grass Country Outfit, this is against everything and against nothing, just a hell lota fun, DRINK YELLAND DANCE!!!! one thing is for sure if you will play this record on a party then EVERYBODY's gonna piss in their pants and go berserk about this fantastic crazy mix of Country, Blue Grass, Folk (without the Flowers) Music.... Recorded at the fantastic STAR TRACK STUDIOS, together with Cliff M. Guiz... buy this record and in between 2 years you gonna wake up in alcatraz getting your ass fucked



DEAD BROTHERS DM BOB HORMONAUTS MONSTERS

NEW: THE MONSTERS 'youth against nature LP/ VR1220 CD/ VRCD20

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where do they come up with this crap?



ADJUDGEMENT AT TWO O'CLOCK PCS RECORDS

All the way from Hanover, Germany, comes Adjudgement. Founded in 1993, the group is no stranger to the ever-evolving hardcore scene. Taking influence from both early-1990s hardcore and recent-day metal, the boys in Adjudgement have released a very solid record. Although it is not groundbreaking or progressive by American standards, it is a very solid release, nonetheless. The style seems to me like a cross-pollination of early Earth Crisis and current Sick of It All.

It's very aggressive, fast, and heavy. Technicality seems to be very important on this album, but don't worry, the boys have thrown in plenty of head banging sections for all of you mulets out there. The highlight would have to be number 3, "Scream Inwards".

-ADF



AGENTS OF THE SUN AURORA DCIDE

Agents of the Sun is hard-rock quintet who take the melodies of King's X and meld them with nu-metal compositions. The overall result sounds like a cross between POD (complete with a gloss of an overall positive vibe), the heaviness of Trust Company, and the funkiness of Fishbone. Agents of the Sun never scream, but they do sing in perfect harmony on the most stellar tracks: the ripping opener "Come Together" and the closing anthem "Fear of Heights".

The Baltimore outfit even rap a little bit, making them digestible to a large sum of people which, in turn, may piss off many rock fans. But that's no matter, as Agents of the Sun's eclectic hard rock mix has the sound that today's radio desires. www.agentsofthesunband.com

-Mike SOS



AI PHOENIX THE DRIVER IS DEAD AUTONOMY RECORDS

Every so often, a band will come around that emits an aura of genuine brilliance. Bergen, Norway's Ai Phoenix is, without a single doubt, one of those bands. Like the sobering silence before a late winter rain, their quiet and beautiful symphonies teeter delicately on the line that separates day from night. "The Driver Is Dead" will leave the listener stunned and confused as to whether to feel inspired, depressed, or both. This music is endlessly pure and impossible to ignore, almost as

if it, incapable of being suppressed, chose the band to create it rather than the other way around. Here, pensive sounds envelop the sullen voice of vocalist Mona Mork like gentle plumes of white smoke, and lush strings and organs hum a song of subtle woe in the vein of Mazzy Star and early Faveez. These songs, like a twinkling beacon on a snow covered hillside, are probably what Sigur Ros listen to when they need to relax.

-Dave Kargol



ALL STATE CHAMPION IS IT NOTHING TO YOU FIVE ONE INC

All State Champion display all of the faculties of an '80s indie-punk band, aptly shown on the outfit's latest 10-track release. Tracks like "Regret's a Bitter Taste" swirl around like Fugazi meeting At the Drive-In at a Thursday show, highlighting the band's deeply intriguing guitar work and intense screams from far away that lead up to fascinating musical crescendos. This Canadian quartet's seriousness shines through on songs like "Sinking Ship", using dissonant rhythmic

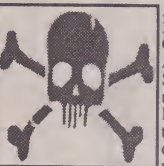
mic rumblings to hammer its point home, while tracks like "Work Is Killing Me" display the band as a unbreakable unit, complete with a driving rhythm and group choral vocals. Emphatic and emotive, IS IT NOTHING TO YOU is bound to sweep you away from the mundane and into the tumultuous yet elegant musical landscape of All State Champion. www.fiveoneinc.com

-Mike SOS



wannabe reviewer: Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

CDS IN MY PLAYER THIS MONTH: The Beatings-The Heart, the Product, the Machine and the Asshole, Lou Dog-61 Old Depot, Hard-Ons-Very Exciting, V/A-The Rocky Horror Punk Rock Show, Country Teasers-Full Moon Empty Sportsbag
BEST GIFT FOR VALENTINE'S DAY IS: rich chocolate and fine, old-vine red zinfandel
I LOVE:sleeping in, staying up, laughing with lights off, loud music



AMEN 3 SONG SAMPLER COLUMBIA RECORDS

Amen is a wild-toned metal band with punk rage. This 3 SONG SAMPLER is powerful and extremely in your face. I do hate the name "Amen." I'm not hearing lyrics in line with Petra or Stryper. I'm also not hearing "Amen" being used as a sarcastic label by which to preach Satan. On track 2, "California's Bleeding", there is an odd edit, but, the song has a little The Sex Pistols' "England's Dreaming" mixed with the reckless abandon of Faith No More. Overall, this is

almost nine minutes of good rock. Change your name, though, damn it.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



AMY BLASCHKE AMY BLASCHKE LUCKYHORSE INDUSTRIES

Indigo Girls? No, sorry, just a sound-alike. I really think they just set up a microphone in a coffeshop. The songs are similar from track to track all musically tedious and somewhat devoid of the subtlety that makes coffeshop rock work. Amy's voice is typical of pissed-off chicks with guitars. There is a track that makes an effort at being original, as "Thoughtlessness of" tries to separate itself from the rest of the pack, but on the whole, the record is fairly typical of a somewhat

exhausted genre.

-AC Lerok



ANATA UNDER A STONE WITH NO INSCRIPTION EARACHE

Anata is a Swedish death-metal troupe that utilizes intricate song structures in addition to thunderous dynamics. On this 10-track disc chock full of metallic mayhem, Anata floors you with technical brutality, aptly shown on such jaw-dropping tunes as "Entropy Within" and "Sewerages of the Mind". Armed with the bite of death metal and the musicality of progressive metal, Anata's double-fisted assault will leave you both fearful and awestruck. www.earache.com

-Mike SOS

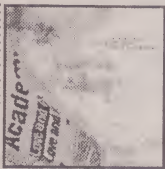


ANATHEMA A NATURAL DISASTER KOCH

Anathema makes dramatic rock music that speaks to the masses on the quintet's latest release, A NATURAL DISASTER. The 10-track affair's lush soundscapes send your senses to the same locale that Peter Gabriel and Pink Floyd frequent with the sensitivity and delivery of Depeche Mode. Tracks such as the ethereal "Are You There" (with operatic female vocals and shades of regret) should leave you breathless, while the riveting "Pulled Under at 2000 Metres a

Second" (complete with a primal metal riff and 10 tons of angst) will leave you rocked. In all, A NATURAL DISASTER will leave you wanting more. (www.anathema.ws)

-Mike SOS



AND ACADEMY LOVE AND AFRICA, LOVE AND ACADEMY SELF-RELEASED

This is actually two separate albums, one recorded in 2001 (LOVE AND AFRICA) the other in 2002 (LOVE AND ACADEMY). The group challenges the listener to describe the songs as either "love" or "Africa" from one track to the next...in order to make this a more personal experience? Whose bright idea was this? I say give this a listen, because this is an interesting band doing some innovative things. And Academy almost comes across as a very experimental Death Cab for

Cutie. It's hard to believe that they have been making records since '98. How they have gone largely unnoticed remains a mystery. The opening tune, "August in Atlanta", sounds like something that would happen if Stereolab made an indie-rock record. The first half of this album is perhaps the easiest to swallow though listener beware: this is not instant pleasure. And Academy are a band that goes against formulas, and I felt obligated to make note of that. andacademy.com

-Jude Ruiz



ANN BERETTA THREE CHORD REVOLUTION UNION LABEL GROUP

I get the three-chord part, but I must have missed the revolution. Although they try to combine rockabilly, country, and straight-up rock 'n' roll, THREE CHORD REVOLUTION is reminiscent of a poor man's Alkaline Trio. "Angry All the Time" seems to be the standout track with a semi-catchy chorus, but it's just a tease, because the rest of the album is chock full of bland songs. After releasing albums on Fueled by Ramen and Lookout! Records, they stepped

down to the Union Label Group. They sound like they could be a fun band to watch live, so check them out if they're touring with bands that are better than them.

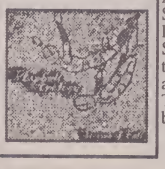
-Joe Wilson



APOCALYPSE POW SMASH THE SUPERSTITION POPFACION

I must say, it is a rarity when a CD you get to review finds its way to your CD rotation because you like it that much. Strangely enough, however, SMASH THE SUPERSTITION managed to do so. Boasting tunes like "It Makes Me Sexy When You Say That", Apocalypse Pow offers a very eclectic sound, somewhat reminiscent of earlier At the Drive-In. Referring to themselves as "revolutionary synth rock," Apocalypse Pow proves, song by song, that this is what audiences have to look forward in the future of rock. The only complaint I have about SMASH THE SUPERSTITION is that the CD is not long enough. The mere five tracks leaves the listener begging for more and, ultimately, pressing "repeat" until their CD player finally dies.

-Carley Charpentier



ASPHALT APOLOGY STORIES OF FALL LABEL UNKNOWN

STORIES OF FALL is a mediocre CD at best. Unfortunately, while the longing for a certain power is there, it ends up sounding much like a confusing indie effort rather than a well-assembled rock album. There are blazing guitars, screaming, and a diverse set of rhythms, but where's the ingenuity? It's disappointing.

-Darren Ratner

music that rocks is better than great sex.



AWAY FROM HERE ANATOMY OF A BROKEN HEART LONELY TREE RECORDS

First off, I think the name of this album, ANATOMY OF A BROKEN HEART, is melodramatic and likely to be the title of a ninth-grade boy's poem to some girl he has never spoken to and has sat next to for the last seven years. ("Anatomy of a Ghost", now, that's a cool name.) Luckily, this review is on the content of the music and not the name of the album. This sounds like a Drive-Thru band with a metal edge and some bad screaming. The lead vocals are that of a typical pop-punk band, and when combined with the screaming, an uneven mixture occurs. At times, the music gets hard and thick (reminiscent of Thrice) and that doesn't fit well with the pop-punk vocals. And then when the music gets poppy and cheesy, the screaming just can't be taken seriously. This band is not awful, by any means, but I do think they need to change some things to build a better overall sound and separate themselves from the all too many bands that sound similar. On a final note, seven out of 10 songs on this album refer to someone's heart.

-Anthony



BACKSLIDE TERROR AGE SOCIAL BOMB RECORDS

Bleeding out from the heart of Germany, Backslide compiled songs of repression, protest, and love for their country, resulting in TERROR AGE. The album is a strong testament to the angst and frustration that youth are feeling due to world events and suppression by the German government. The combination of hard-hitting lyrics and instrumentals intertwined with the classic punk sound of throbbing bass, fast drums, and rhythmic guitar has no doubt added to the elite library of great punk albums. Whether you want to have something to listen and relate to or just put on for a good time with friends, make sure you pick up TERROR AGE. www.backslide-youth.de

-Breanne Dunn



BAYSIDE SIRENS AND CONDEMNANCES VICTORY RECORDS

For their debut album on Victory Records, Bayside, a foursome from Long Island, NY, conceived an offspring of devastation, mourning for failed romance, and imagery of deep pain and suffering, resulting in SIRENS AND CONDEMNANCES. Sorrow drives this album with beautiful guitar, bass arrangements of intricate detail, and a drum beat to match the beating of the shattered heart that inspired the lyrics. The album, however, lacks differentiation between songs, with the theme in each song being much like the last. Do they add much to the ever-growing, vast emo scene of heartfelt lyrics and upbeat arrangements? Yes. But is it substantial? Judge for yourself. SIRENS AND CONDEMNANCES is out now. www.baysiderocks.com

-Breanne Dunn



BEAR VS SHARK RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE IN THE BEST HANDS EQUAL VISION RECORDS

If the lead singer of Face to Face left the group and started a new band, this would be it. Now, if you hate FTF, then you will probably dislike this album. If you are in the other two percent, then you just might like it. Bear Vs Shark managed to put over 45 minutes worth of music on the new CD. It might have been good, but I am still undecided. You should probably go to www.bearvsshark.com and decide for yourself. I think it might be worth it.

-Ian Wilkins



BELLE AND SEBASTIAN DEAR CATASTROPHE WAITRESS ROUGH TRADE RECORDS

From the 60 pounds of press materials accompanying this record, I can say with confidence that Belle and Sebastian is a Scottish pop band who has been banging away for seven years. From actually listening to the record, a far more interesting portrait is visible. Belle and Sebastian is a flurry of elements of the Moody Blues' DAYS OF FUTURE PASSED and touches of Burt Bacharach, as odd as that may sound. It's infinitely interesting, to be completely honest. I sat and listened to the whole thing confused before I played it again and understood where Belle and Sebastian is going. It's a creative place, where everything is slightly off-kilter, and I like it. Everything from the melodies to the effects hit me out of left field. It's definitely worth a listen.

-AC Lerok



BINGO THE CICADA AND OTHER STORIES CRAVEDOG RECORDS

It has been a while since folk was tastefully done, but this gent Bingo comes pretty damn close. With audible elements of Kenny Wayne Shepard, Neil Young, and Mariachi, Bingo layers a pretty thick mixture of folk sensibility. The songs starkly contrast each other, going from mixing horns and steel drum on "Luciagua" to resonator and harmonica on "Wishing". The producer of the record leans pretty heavily on the vocals, however, which is disappointing considering the intricacy of the back-up tracks. At any rate, Bingo is alright, and THE CICADA AND OTHER STORIES will stay in my player for a while.

-AC Lerok



BLAKE BROWN FLICKER AND FADE THE SKY COLLECTIVE 4.0

The debut solo full-length album from this Colorado folk singer is a quiet, melancholy journey that leads to the soul. With a sparse style, mostly just acoustic guitar and his high, almost effeminate voice, Brown has crafted his own soft emo world. There are some terrific moments on this disc, such as the powerful track "A Moment of Silence", in which he uses a full back-up band. Unfortunately, for most of the CD these songs seem to wander around in search of a melody. Brown, a true artist, often performs live without mics or amplification. His live show is sure to be saturated with the sincere intensity that permeates this disc. Hopefully some of that intensity will translate into more accessible melodies on his next release. www.blakebrown.com

-DUG

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BLEACH ASTRONOMY TOOTH & NAIL RECORDS

Bleach is a group of pop/rock ramblers whose one-two punch is well worth the wait. ASTRONOMY is the band's fourth album and a great continuation of the band's six-year career with catchy, ballsy songs such as "December" and "Plan to Pull Through". The emotion boils over with arrangements that go from touching to tumultuous, nasty to nice. ASTRONOMY has a great overall flow and keeps you listening to the very end.

-Darren Ratner



BLITZ KID TRACE OF A STRANGER ANTIDOTE

This recording left me with sort of a sour taste in my mouth. Usually I love me some good horror-punk, but TRACE OF A STRANGER left me empty. The riffing is extremely predictable. This can usually be overlooked with some decent vocal work and choruses, but Blitz Kid did not quite seem to pull it off. In fact, the opening track, "Let's Go to the Cemetery", honestly annoyed me and made it that much more difficult to soak in the rest of the album. If you'd like to just get a taste of the album to see if you want to purchase it, check out the song "Lupen Tooth", as I feel it showcases the highest points the disc reaches. If not, be on your way and check into the genre of horror-punk a little bit more.

-Hibbard



BOSS MARTIANS THE SET-UP MUSICK

The fifth effort by Boss Martians, THE SET-UP, is a concoction of power-pop, punk, garage, hard rock and even some soul. For some bands, this could spell calamity, but not these guys. It's not every day that you see a band using so many different styles so well. Tracks such as "I Am Your Radio" and "Oh, Angela" are great lounge-out or rock-out songs. Set this up in your CD player.

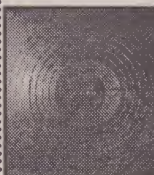
-Darren Ratner



BURNT BY THE SUN THE PERFECT IS THE ENEMY OF THE GOOD RELAPSE

Bow down to one of the most powerful new acts to emerge in today's hardcore scene. Burnt by the Sun withholds a fearsome presence that is apparent on the 14-track evolution of mayhem. THE PERFECT IS THE ENEMY OF THE GOOD is a compelling follow-up to their acclaimed debut album. The energetic and atrocious acts are simple traditions that seem to carry on through each song. I've endured my fair share of wholesome hardcore within the past months, yet Burnt by the Sun's latest release sticks out. It's got long-lasting energy, unapologetic rage, and riffs that could quite possibly drive you insane! I recommend this CD to anyone that enjoys a good ass-beating in audio form.

-Courtney Riot



BURST PREY ON LIFE RELAPSE RECORDS

Burst has been bobbing and weaving through musical styles for over 10 years now. Once guitarist Robert Reinholdz joined the band, they found their way and started writing some monster riffs. PREY ON LIFE is the first full-length from this band from Sweden. The production quality is well above par, and the songs are well-put-together. "Rain" is the standout track, equipped with a haunting bass line and screams belted by Linus Jagerskog to match. This is a great CD for the melodic hardcore fan. I can see these guys on tour with Hopesfall or Poison the Well, so if this tour ever comes near, you go check it out. It'll probably blow your ass out.

-Joe Wilson



CANNIBAL CORPSE THE WRETCHED SPAWN METAL BLADE

I truly cannot imagine with all the strength in my brain a heavier metal album than this. THE WRETCHED SPAWN actually makes me want to cry, if not for the brutality of the music, then for the lyrics, which fall nowhere short of any other Cannibal Corpse release. On an even more superficial note, the cover art itself would make anyone cry, so I believe the guys have succeeded in exactly what they had planned on doing. You're either a lover or a hater of this band and every fan is going to love it, and everyone who's not a fan is still not going to become one. There's not much new ground broken here, but that doesn't matter, because they're doing exactly what they want to do. Go get it before it gets you.

-Hibbard



CAPDOWN POUND FOR THE SOUND CANDLELIGHT

I can honestly say I haven't heard such a proper and rocking use of horns since Sublime. This U.K. band has finally released a CD for the masses of America...and I must say, they did a damn good job. POUND FOR THE SOUND is the second album from these punk/ska rockers and offers 11 upbeat tracks. Each track jumps from style to style. Songs like "Time to Get Out" use less horns and appeal more to their punk fans, while the next track, "Pound for the Sound", breaks out the horns and entices those same punk fans to kick off their Converse and dance. To say the least, I really enjoyed this U.K. treat.

-Carley Charpentier

i'm so tired of the generic shite out lately.



CASTLE OLDCHAIR

SAD PANTS

STANDARD RECORDING COMPANY

Every so often Earth produces an Isaac Brock, a Will Oldham, or a Castle Oldchair—the kind of songwriter that can make any project into someone's favorite band. While it's a bit presumptuous to say Castle is on his way up the ranks to indie-rock luminary (considering his expansive catalog of only one album), it is definitely a possibility. SAD PANTS is full of beautifully-crafted, mellow songs, perfectly complemented by Castle Oldchair's warbling voice. It is evident in

his lyrics that he has an eye for the simple and meaningful things, which gives these songs a personal feel. Even though he hasn't yet reached iconic status, there are signs pointing him that way and it will be interesting to see how far he'll go.

-Casey Clague



CHIGGER RED

THE HARD ROAD

ROADTOOTH RECORDS

Chigger Red is a hard rock band that is a throwback to the '70s. Blues rock, arena rock, and hard country rock is thrown in with visions of mullets, spandex, and flying-V guitars. There are arpeggios, but I do not hear the cowbells. Not being exceptionally good at it, offering a funny parody or doing much to update the parody, the result is a new record that already smells musty.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



CHUBBY

IS IT TIME

GIGANTIC

It's a silly name for a band with true rock grit to have, but maybe that's Chubby's point. This Boston-based quartet have the knack to deliver driving, heartfelt rock anthems like "Fight or Fuck" without the daftness of its mainstream counterparts throughout its impressive 11-track release. Songs like the wavering dynamics of "Sweet Song" or the hypnotically rhythmic "A Day and a Half" display an undeniable bass groove that is as sultry as intense, while the top of the music

is both heavy and catchy. The obvious comparison to Chubby is probably Foo Fighters, as both bands tackle rock with the same gusto, but Chubby contains a little more R&B backbone, permitting the band to be smooth and clever a bit more than Dave and company. www.giganticmusic.com

-Mike SOS



COLONIAL EXCESS

BUILT FOR ASS

SELF-RELEASED

Accompanying this CD was a Polaroid of a mulleted woman in a teddy and some red plastic jewelry looking like the nasty end of a meth binge. Imagine (if you can stomach it) waking up in this woman's bed after a night of incredibly bad judgment. BUILT FOR ASS is the album in that woman's stereo. This brand of eerie, electro-booby music cut with random sound bites and various "bleep bleeps" gives that particular uneasy feeling like you just want to get out of

there...and it doesn't even matter if the sex was good.

-Casey Clague



DAKONA

PERFECT CHANGE

MAVERICK RECORDING COMPANY

The debut Maverick Records release by this Vancouver-based quartet is nothing short of a knockout. Maverick Records, a joint venture between Madonna and Warner Brothers, is as slick a label as anyone could hope for. Dakona's new disc is almost too slick. With a heady, well-produced sound that is best described as a cross between Live, Train, and Third Eye Blind, the band tugs at the heart strings while pumping out nearly flawless rock songs. It's surprising that a few

songs off this album aren't already in regular radio rotation. One has to assume that the band's label must be focusing on their new Alanis Morissette release before turning to the local radio stations to twist arms for Dakona. Not that this album will need much leverage to be embraced by commercial radio and the huge fan base that flocks to music this accessible. It will be a shock if this band doesn't become one of the top 20 grossing bands in the world in the next couple of years. In a way, it makes you nostalgic for the humble, one-hit wonders that will spend their careers playing weekday nights at local clubs. This band has major outdoor festival written all over it. www.maverickrecords.com

-DUG



[DARYL]

UNEVEN SURFACES

IDOL RECORDS

I'm not exactly sure what the desired outcome was here. I think the band's intention was to put together a (radio-friendly) pop-punk album with a hint of new wave (because new wave is all the rage). If this be the case, then I say they've succeeded. Lead singer Dylan Silvers voice has the same annoyingly raspy snarl as Mighty Mighty Bosstones frontman Dicky Barrett. I can think of better ways to spend your hard-earned cash.

-Jude Ruiz



DEATHWITCH

VIOLENCE BLASPHEMY SODOMY

EARACHE

Usually, when an album is started with a Charles Manson sound bite, it sets a certain tone and Deathwitch's metallic overtures are no exception. This 14-track release is as ruthless a display of metal as one can imagine, combining incessant double-bass drumming with punishing guitars and enough vocal venom spewed to piss just about everyone you can think of off. Not being known for its political correctness, songs like "Worthless Scum" and "Fuck Off and Die" are

pretty direct messages to those in Deathwitch's line of fire. While the insults are hurled effortlessly in a guttural growl, no less these tirades, combined with the old-school death metal approach, strike the same angry chords that Slipknot and countless other metal bands employ. www.earache.com

-Mike SOS



DECIBULLY

CITY OF FESTIVALS

POLYVINYL RECORDS

You've heard of comfort food? Well, this is comfort music. This album has the same warm, sunny day feel that The Thrills or Polyphonic Spree albums have. CITY OF FESTIVALS is a quintessential example of how a band can combine indie-rock and alt-country with some electronic tinges in just the right doses. Cut from the same cloth as Wilco's YANKEE HOTEL FOXTROT, this Milwaukee septet features William Seidel (The Promise Ring,

Camden) and Ryan Webber (The Promise Ring), and when your attention is focused to the textured arrangements, you will hear that your listening to experienced musicians at work (all members have various side projects). Decibully shines bright on opening tracks like "On the Way to Your Hotel" and "Tables Turn", which are guaranteed not to leave you high and dry. decibully.com

-Jude Ruiz



DEICIDE

SCARS OF THE CRUCIFIX

EARACHE

It was very difficult for me to give this record a fair review based solely on the music when I had to listen to songs titled "Mad as God", "When Heaven Burns", "Fuck Your God", and "Go Now Your Lord Is Dead". I completely respect this band's opinions regarding religion and spirituality, but I do not agree with them. Musically, however, this release is very similar to the previous Deicide efforts. The riffing is quite fast, and if you're a fan of extremely heavy metal, you will be more than pleased with this release so don't let my opinions discourage you.

-Hibbard



DISMISSED

TAKING THE GOOD WITH THE BAD

INDIE VISION MUSIC

These guys have potential, but there's just something about them that irks me. Singer Dave Arthur can actually sing well, but the vocals are a little disappointing at times when he keeps singing the same melody in every song. The range is there, but I don't hear anything I can sing along with in these songs. TAKING THE GOOD WITH THE BAD is Thrive-inspired and predictable, at best. From the vocals to the guitar riffs, it just seems like they took the easy way out while writing these songs. If they polish their sound a bit and prove that they aren't afraid to try something new, their next record should kick some ass.

-Joe Wilson



DOLOROUS CANTER

THE ALPHA PROJECT EP

SELF-RELEASED

Ever heard a band that would benefit immensely by just improving their quality of recording, the type of band that has a creative sound, sincere emotion, and amazing potential? This is Dolorous Canter. Their five-song effort, THE ALPHA PROJECT EP, reveals a talent for creating momentum throughout songs, culminating in a climax of raw emotive energy. Each track is born with the combination of slow melodies and soft vocals, allowing the listener to absorb the somber atmosphere. This is where Dolorous Canter lead you straight into an explosion of emotion. Melodic guitars suddenly turn into chaotic distortion, gentle whispers transform into impulsive screams...and questions whether this band is talented disappear.

-Anthony



DRUGMONEY

MTN CTY JNK

HYBRID RECORDINGS

Lead guitarist/vocalist Fisher Meehan of Asheville, NC's DrugMoney has a lot to say and says it proudly. Amongst the acoustics and distortion-filled guitar lines on MTN CTY JNK, lyrics such as "Killing everyone around" (from "Small Thinking") are like superglue on the brain. Even if you refuse to care about what each song means, you eventually do. There's a great, punkish gangle to his voice sometimes like Tim Armstrong. It's also entertaining on the record's more thumping tracks, such as "Wish Away".

-Darren Ratner



DUB NARCOTIC SOUND SYSTEM

DUB NARCOTIC SOUND SYSTEM

K RECORDS

Old-school dub meets Jon Spencer-styled alt-blues on this deep and wacky new disc from Calvin Johnson (Beat Happening) with the rhythm section of Chris Sutton (C.O.C.O.) and Heather Dunn (Tiger Trap, No No's). Dunn sings one of the standout tracks, "Fuck Me Up". That is just how this disc is in delivery and style: direct and sexual, potent and vigorous. This is dance music for the decadent of Roman proportions.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



DUFF MUFFIN

THE EAGLE EYES EP

DO THE DOG MUSIC

Duff Muffin continues in the direction of a harder, faster ska formulated by much of the third wave of the ska revival scene from the late '80s. This EP is recommended if you like Green Day, Offspring, and The Mighty Mighty Bosstones. There is a three-piece brass section, and there are many examples of fast-paced ska-core on this album. The music is vital and infectious, with Duff Muffin deserving kudos for producing an excellent album in what may seem to be a well-trodden genre with nothing else to offer.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

music that rocks is better than great sex.



EASTSIDE SUICIDES S/T SUPER SECRET RECORDS

Eastside Suicides are just your generic run of the mill punk rock band. At best, the band is a garage band with hopes of being The Stooges. The music aspect of the band is alright. Nothing spectacular, but it's still tolerable. At times though, the songs seem to blend together and if you weren't paying attention, you'd think it was one long song. The fact that lead singer Frankie Nowhere has no sense of harmony and melody and only sings in a pseudo nasal snarl doesn't help anything. If anything, it just reinforces the one long song feeling. By the time you get to "Bad News" you'll know to expect something obnoxious to come out of his mouth just about every song before he kicks into the vocal parts. Completely generic, run of the mill, and obnoxious. With a new lead singer, and a some different musical arrangements, this band could be great. Until then, Eastside Suicides are forgettable.

-Dane Jackson



EE RAMADAN ASIAN MAN RECORDS

This record just so happens to be a re-release of EE's initial recording, previously having only been sold at their shows. Listening to this record, it disappoints me that the record went out of print initially after such a short run. I have always been a sucker for tasteful cello, which this record brings to the table. The songs are very subdued, showcasing a variety of styles that always seem to find their way back to melancholy. It's an extremely emotional record, evoking an array of sentiments throughout the 10-track disk. Unfortunately, EE has undergone a drastic lineup change since the recording of this record. That being said, this record is strong, and I dig it. "Asian Gangsta Kidz" and "Battery Davis" were two of the sounder tracks although the record as a whole is pretty damn enticing.

-AC Lerok



ENSIGN LOVE THE MUSIC, HATE THE KIDS BLACKOUT!

I wish I could change the top-five list I made for SKRATCH of my favorite CD releases of 2003, because Ensign's LOVE THE MUSIC, HATE THE KIDS would, no doubt, have been at the top! Each one of the 20 tracks featured on this album completely blew my mind away. It's fast, aggressive, catchy punk rock with a vocal attack that is screaming insanity! Talent, politics, insanity, and truth never sounded so good. You really can't expect anything but perfection from these guys, and this CD is no exception. If you aren't familiar with Ensign, there's no better time than now to get familiar and go pick up their latest release. www.ensign.com

-Courtney Riot



ESTROGENOCIDE I LIKE TO CUDDLE M.H. RECORDS

It is CDs like this one that give synthesizers a bad name. I LIKE TO CUDDLE sounds like something the sadistic neighbor boy in fifth grade would have recorded when I let him use my keyboard. If the FCC wants to ban gangsta rap for degradation of women, Estrogenocide should get smacked with a muzzel and a locked in a maximum-security jail cell. Repeating lyrics like "You get decapitated by my ceiling fan," Estrogenocide is by far the worst excuse for musical talent that I've heard in a long time. There is a revolutionary hidden message amongst songs like "I Will Shoot a Load in Your Headless Corpse", but for now I'll stick to my gut instinct and tell you how much I LIKE TO CUDDLE sucks.

-Carley Charpentier



wannabe reviewer: Kevin Conway

CDS IN MY PLAYER THIS MONTH: Monday In London-Self Titled, Thrice-Artist in the Ambulance, The Bronx-Self Titled, Story of the Year-Page Avenue, Less Than Jake-Borders and Boundaries
BEST GIFT FOR VALENTINE'S DAY IS: A girl to spend it with
I LOVE: People that are real



EVEN IN BLACKOUTS FORESHADOWS ON THE WALL KNOCK KNOCK RECORDS

Even in Blackouts is a very refreshing band. Instead of following the trend of pop punk or emo pop music, it decided to go another route and come out with something that is both a joy to listen to, but also a breath of fresh air. Jughead and Dan Lumley, of Screaming Weasel fame, team up again for this up beat folk rock punk infusion. The puzzle is complete with Lizzie Eldredge on vocals. She adds a sweetness and melodic punch to the amazing acoustic arrangements. This EP, meant as a teaser for the band's upcoming full-length includes three originals, as well as three covers. Hell, there's even a special appearance from Dan Vapid. This will go down as one of the best acoustic bands of 2004. Think Kevin Seconds' acoustic work mixed with early Against Me and you're almost there.

-Dane Jackson



EVER WE FALL ENDURA RISE RECORDS

Ever We Fall should have stuck with the sound that opens up this EP. The first minute or so of the first track is laid-back, swirling indie rock that hints at slower Further Seems Forever and then, BOOM!, the whole mood is ruined by pop. No, upbeat music is not inherently bad; however, upbeat music with droopy lyrics is antithetical, so don't be surprised if the two elements cancel each other out and your copy of ENDURA has no sound on it whatsoever.

-Casey Clague



EYE OF THE STORM FALL INTO GRACE SELF-RELEASED CD

Eye of the Storm is a quartet that hail from the metro NYC area whose metallic leanings fall somewhere in between the powerful crunch of the NYC scene circa the mid 1990s to the wall of bands whose metal influence are a little left of center (like Tool, Rush, and especially early Soundgarden). The 13 tracks on FALL INTO GRACE showcase a band whose stellar musicianship and dark atmosphere combine for a potent blend of heavy rock with an aura of eeriness that is hard to shake and even harder to ignore. Tracks like the brooding title track or the tribal "Masquerade" sound like a cross between the spirit of Fates Warning with the soul of Alice in Chains, making Eye of the Storm a treat for the metal fan who takes their metal seriously. www.eyeofthestorm.com

-Mike SOS



EYES OF FIRE DISINTEGRATE EP CENTURY MEDIA

I've dealt with a few bands off of Century Media, the home label to forceful hardcore in all forms. Eyes of Fire's latest release, DISINTEGRATE, is no exception, staying true to the roots of what real hardcore is all about. This EP is just a small taste of what's to come early this year with the release of full-length ASHES TO EMBERS. It's not really a small taste, as "Disintegrate", "Hopeless", and "Anyone", the three tracks featured on the DISINTEGRATE EP, are loud, brutal, and to the point. I'm not sure if I'm even ready for the full-length!

-Courtney Riot



FIFTH HOUR HERO YOU HAVE HURT MY BUSINESS AND MY REPUTATION TOO NO IDEA

Quebec's Fifth Hour Hero play the type of customary melodic rock that's all over the place nowadays. No doubt this is appetizing to innumerable kids into the pop-punk/emo craze, as their songs are upbeat and quite catchy. Moreover, FHH seem to be fine songwriters. Yet, still I cannot seem to get into this. A noteworthy variation on the standard pop-punk formula, however, is the shared vocal duties from Genevieve Tremblay and Olivier Maguire. Personally, I prefer when Olivier takes over the vocals, which unfortunately occurs solely on the speedy, slightly dark "Kill or Cure". This four-song EP ends with "Badly Drawn", a passionate, heartfelt, yet staid acoustic number.

-Janelle Jones



FINK SON OF FINKENSTEIN ANTIDOTE RECORDS

Have you ever wanted to be in a horror-punk band but didn't want to commit to a devilock and masacara? Do standard punk-rock songs just seem a little too fast for your arthritic fingers to play? Then Randy Curran has a band for you, and it's called Fink. Actually, it's just old Randy on vocals and guitar. (The band's been in need of members for quite a while.) Sure, he's got the titles down to "My Momma Was a Teenage Prostitute", "I Married a Zombie", etc. but lacks the musical edge of true horror punks like The Damned and The Misfits. Expect to see Fink on the State Fair and tailgate party circuit for many years to come (if he can only find a rhythm section "X-treme" enough to back him up).

-Casey Clague



FLATTBUSH SMASH THE OCTOPUS! KOOLARROW RECORDS

Socio-political Philippine speed-metal bands are few and far between. After listening to the debut release from Southern California's Flattbush, one can see why. The band name is taken from a defunct Philippine rock band that was silenced by authorities a quarter of a century ago. The only Filipinos in the band are the two Maniago brothers, but with angry lyrics sung in a combination of Tagalog and English, the band truly lets its Asian roots show. The band's quirky style of pounding speed metal mixed with jabbering, unintelligible choruses is nearly as appealing as it is repulsive, in a strange way. Fans of Swedish death metal or Japanese hardcore might find this music creative and liberating. For those who listen to music to relieve a stressful day, this is not the right disc to slip into the CD player. Lots of props go out to these guys for a committed message but damn, I wish I could figure out what the hell they were talking about. www.koolarrow.com

-DUG

you look like a dumbass with headphones on.



FOR THE WORSE
RODENT POPSICLE RECORDS

I start by saying the cover is brutal. It is a picture of a watery, scandalous, mean-ass shit in a toilet. The CD itself is alright. I don't really think it is something special. Basically, it seems like For the Worse took the good old punk handbook and read it from cover to cover a thousand times. The music sounds good, and the lyrics sound perfect, but there just isn't anything original. I could probably listen to this album over and over and not get sick of it, but I already have a thousand other albums I would rather hear. Of course, if you don't believe me, then go to the Website: www.fortheworse.com

-Ian Wilkins



FRENEMIES
FRIENDSHIP
SELF-RELEASED

Self-proclaimed "famed" Oxes drummer Chris Freeland brings his friends this eccentric blend of electronica, strings, and off-time percussion. A bit overindulgent at times, but fun nonetheless. It's good experimental music, for sure. However, experimental music is essentially just someone's pet project, so, while it's interesting to listen to and fun to give to people you know, don't expect it to have any real mass appeal. And don't ever call yourself "famed."

-Casey Clague



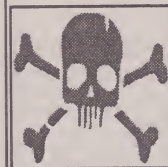
GARAGELAND

LAST EXIT TO GARAGELAND
FOODCHAIN RECORDS

A good rule of thumb to follow is not to sound exactly like every one of your influences. It's pretty obvious from LAST EXIT TO GARAGELAND that someone is fixated on the late-'80s/early-'90s scene. Combining elements of The Lemonheads, The Pixies, Pavement, Sebadoh, Archers of Loaf, Nirvana, and, oh hell, every band from that era, Garageland have created a sound that would be awesome if it hadn't been done so many times before. Fans of

Garageland, however, should be thrilled, as this record is a re-release of their 1997 debut, with eight bonus tracks one of which is a cover of The Byrds' "So You Want to Be a Rock and Roll Star".

-Casey Clague



GIRLISH FIGURE
ROTTEN TO THE CORE
RODENT POPSICLE RECORDS

Let me just say that just because you're a chick and you can reach those high notes doesn't mean you have to. ROTTEN TO THE CORE is a pretty cool album, except for when they get all slow and they start to get preachy about love and shit. If you're a fan of Courtney Love, L7, or anything else with a bunch of lesbians in the band, then put on your leather chaps, hop on your Vespa, and pick this CD up before your girlfriend does. One more thing: it is hard to come

across dark and gothic when you sound like you were an extra in FAST TIMES AT RIDGE-MONT HIGH. Valley girl, like, for sure. Gag me with a spoon.

-Ian Wilkins



GODHEAD
EVOLVER
REALITY ENTERTAINMENT

Having picked up their bags and moving from Marilyn Manson's Posthuman Records, Godhead dropped the goth and picked up the mainstream rock. While keeping with the black attire and disturbing album cover, Godhead's refreshing yet surprising new sound is bound to pick up a new fan base. Sticking to a much more user-friendly sound, EVOLVER allows the listener an opportunity to appreciate the talented vocals and significantly less harsh instrumentals of Godhead from track to track. With emotionally-driven ballads like "Dream", EVOLVER opens up a whole new chapter to the Godhead story.

-Carley Charpentier



GONER
HOW GOOD WE HAD IT
BIFOCAL MEDIA

For real, where have these guys been all my life? I know they've been in Raleigh, NC, selling the shit out of your debut CD, DOLLAR MOVIE, but when I received HOW GOOD WE HAD IT to review, I kicked myself for not finding them earlier. Considering their exceptional songwriting skills, they probably figured they didn't need to record any guitar tracks for this CD. The mixture of a dirty bass sound and layered keyboard effects makes up for it and pretty much allows you to forget that there is no guitar present...and, honestly, it's not even missed after listening to the songs a few times. Some of the vocals remind me of R.E.M. at times, Archers of Loaf at others. If you like rockin' indie music, then pick this disc up soon.

-Joe Wilson



GUNMOLL
BOARD OF REJECTION
NO IDEA

From the moment the sounds of Gunmoll's full-length debut, BOARD OF REJECTION, reached my ears, the vocals of Mike Hale tugged at my core. In conjunction with the beauty of Hale's vocals, the strength of the pulsating drums and the charismatic string arrangements clearly demonstrate their skill, musical talent, and unity as a band. The sound shifts from fast-hitting and mosh-worthy to heartfelt songs of lost love. If you're looking for bland songs absent of fun and powerful songs, don't bother picking up BOARD OF REJECTION; but if you want loud and bold, BOARD OF REJECTION is sure to make your ears bleed.

www.noidearecords.com

-Breanne Dunn

www.skratchmagazine.com

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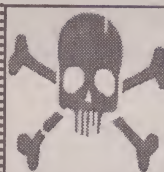


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HALF PAST GONE
AFLOAT-PROMO
SELF-RELEASED

This is an independent release by an independent band, so I will go easy and try to keep an open mind. I knew what I was in for before I even opened the CD package when I read: "If you do not like this CD then please give it to a friend that might" on the back of the package. The only problem is, I don't have any friends that would like this CD, so off to the garbage it goes. But it turns out that this is their first full-length, so let's give them the benefit of the doubt and a few pointers:

turn the crunch down on the guitars, stop ripping off Davey Havok...and these songs could be bearable.

-Joe Wilson



HANDSOME DEVIL
KNOCK YOURSELF OUT
DIABLO GUAP0

Right from the start, it is apparent the similarities between Handsome Devil and Lit. Their debut album, LOVE AND KISSES FROM THE UNDERGROUND, was produced by Jeremy Popoff of Lit/Dirty Martini. This new release is Handsome Devil's self-produced debut, and it shows many similarities to their first album, including recording style. The steadily-paced drums lead the path for driving bass lines and harmonic hooks. The tracks are moderately paced and have similarities to Good Charlotte. All in all, there is nothing new here, but a well-put-together pop/rock album that will most definitely find itself in the background at local pool halls.

-Kevin Conway



HANOI ROCKS
TWELVE SHOTS ON THE ROCKS
LIQUOR AND POKER MUSIC

Finland's Hanoi Rocks has been not much more than a footnote in the Motley Crue story (Hanoi Rocks drummer Razzle was killed in a car driven by a wasted Vince Neil in 1984). But after a 17-year absence, the group has reformed. And while this brand of glitz and cock rock is not my cup of meat, it is obvious to anyone listening to TWELVE SHOTS ON THE ROCKS that Hanoi Rocks can play and write some solid muscled-up glam/hair-band rock. So, if you are missing the hairspray and big showbiz rock of the late '80s, get up and go get TWELVE SHOTS ON THE ROCKS.

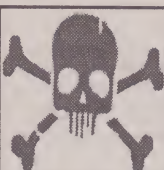
-H. Barry Zimmerman



HIGH TONE SON OF A BITCH
BETTER YOU THAN ME
THRONE/SHIFTY

There's something interesting about this band, and I guess it's that they're pretty much the only stoner-rock group I've ever been able to endure. Something about this band is inspired by The Grateful Dead, but with more modern rock influences. I mean, it's actually entertaining. The guitar work is at least interesting, and the overall sound has got a great feel to it. If you dig Magnified Eye or Kyuss, you're going to miss out if you don't buy this record. There's even some good synthesizer work on the disc, adding to an already thick sound. This is only an EP, but the best song is easily "Last Dance". Not much to complain about here, except that the tracks do sort of seem to run together just because they sound so similar. But some people like that. If you're one of those people, go get this!

-Hibbard

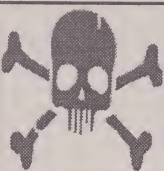


HOTWIRE
THE ROUTINE
RCA RECORDS

The latest release from Deutschland's pseudo '80s rockers Hotwire is a thing of beauty (and a bit of a beast). Americans should be very afraid when foreigners start sounding more like an American band than Americans. The 12 tunes on this disc are a celebration of all the great hair bands: Dokken, Keel, Stryper. Wait a second! Did I say great? Well, when it comes to bombastic rock ballads with really catchy melodies, it doesn't get much better than this. These guys have

a big following in Europe and with good reason. If any of the lame-ass hair bands of the '80s had sounded this good, I never would have cut my hair. After beating you over the head with some solid rock, this is a band that is not afraid to pull out an acoustic guitar for a minute-long solo at the end of a tune. Well-written tunes, great musicians, and an interesting lead vocal...Rock on, dudes. www.killhotwire.com

-DUG



IDIOTWIND
MAYBE TOMORROW
SELF-RELEASED

San Diego is the home of many aspiring bands. At first listen, Idiotwind sounds like another band from this Southern CA Mecca playing outdated songs. So I took the album title as a suggestion and thought that maybe I'd like it in the morning. Granted, it wasn't as bad as the first listen, but it didn't get any better, either. Idiotwind formed in '00 with just a drum machine, so this material is probably leaps and bounds from where they started, but it just sounds like this

style of '90s rock music would only appeal to someone in their mid 30s. If you fall into that age range, you might dig this.

-Joe Wilson



JASON ANDERSON
NEW ENGLAND
SECRETLY CANADIAN

The new release from this Portland, OR, minstrel is a journey into the bland. Although Anderson reaches for the stars with some poetic lyrics on much of the album, there is just too much emphasis on him pissing his own pants and being fucked up. There is a place for profanity in rock, but maybe the best place isn't a quiet, barely musical CD where all the emphasis is on the lyrical content. Most of the music on this disc is simple acoustic guitar and piano (though there is the occasional tambourine poking through the background noise). There is a lot of amateurish talking in the background here, giving the album the feel that much of this was recorded in somebody's living room. Some emo fans might like this type of disc for its lack of commercial appeal...but then again, some emo fans might like anything in a black turtle-neck. This release comes from Secretly Canadian, which ought to keep it kind of a secret until Anderson writes more appealing music. www.secretlycanadian.com

-DUG

when a cd is great, i get all giggly gay.



**JUST A FIRE
LIGHT UP
ASIAN MAN**

Chicago trio, Just a Fire, is an explosive branch of indie rock. Fred Erskine (Hoover, June of 44), Chris Daly (Sweep the Leg Johnny), and Scott Adamson (Abilene) joined forces to create one unique debut Asian Man release. The songs are heavily influenced by the protection of free speech, giving them a very Clash and Police feel. This 37-minute, nine-track CD is probably the most refreshing thing in the scene since Joe Strummer took to the stage. The entire album is as raw, but striking me the most was track 7, "Where the Weeds Grow". The unity of guitar, bass, drums, horns, and vocals display unmistakable talent and a message. Take a step outside of the ordinary and indulge yourself with a refreshing sound of promise. I'm looking forward to hearing and seeing more of Just a Fire in the future. www.asianmanrecords.com

-Courtney Riot



**KITCHENS & BATHROOMS
VEHICLES BEYOND
FORGE AGAIN**

The first thing that strikes you when listening to this album from Canadian trio Kitchens & Bathrooms is the arresting vocals of the lead singer (whose name is impossible to find). His voice is so striking that it nearly drowns out the music...which would be a shame, as it has the potential to engage your attention and interest as much of not more than the singer. The incredible drumming on "First One In, Last One Out" will steal your breath away, but the rest of the instruments in the song are just as impressive...which seems to be a running theme (varying which instrument takes the lead) in the entire album. Definitely a winner overall and an album worth rushing out right now to get. www.forgeagainrecords.com

-tChow



**LIARS
THEY WERE WRONG, SO WE DROWNED
MUTE CORPORATION**

When Liars, one of the NYC indie scene's better-known and well-liked bands, set out to create their third album, they hoped to grow away from the sound featured on their last album, *THEY THREW US IN A TRENCH*. Despite the many bands that proclaim growth in new releases, Liars has actually delivered. *THEY WERE WRONG* is a beautiful story album, painting a mystical and eerie picture of witchcraft and all of its mysteries. Songs switch perspectives from that of witchery to those opposed. The story is not told only through the lyrics and the titles, but also through the very organic and tribal nature of the sound of the entire album. Primitive drum beats, haunting guitar parts, and by chanting make for a truly creepy but wonderful album. www.liarsliarsliars.com

-tChow



**LONG SINCE FORGOTTEN
STANDING ROOM ONLY
ROCKETSTAR**

Baring similarity to such power-pop powerhouses as Jimmy Eat World and The Get-Up Kids and to newer loved bands like Mae and Copeland, this band sounds like it will be another winner. As the album pushes on, never growing tired or tedious and always inciting head-bopping and foot-tapping, nothing conflicts with the first impression Long Since Forgotten incites. This four-piece (with three members) have played together since 1999, and its current lineup (together since 2001) here releases its first full-length from Rocketstar Recordings. *STANDING ROOM ONLY* is a beautifully and cheerfully crafted album, with a professional and mature sound a bit unusual for a newer band. Nothing except bad advertising and distribution can stop this band from blowing up. Purchase of this album is highly encouraged. www.lsfrock.com

-tChow



**LOSTPROPHETS
START SOMETHING
COLUMBIA**

Lostprophets are back with a vengeance on its sophomore effort, *START SOMETHING*. Wheeling out its uniquely grandiose brand of rock, producer Eric Valentine's sound sculpturing pushed and expanded the outfit well beyond the beleaguered audience's perceptions, balancing out what was missing from *FAKESOUND OF PROGRESS* and allowing the clan to reclaim its position as best British rock band. These 12 new songs, ranging from the raging "We Still Kill the Old Way," "Burn, Burn" to the ultra-catchy "10, 3", affirm the band's lofty position, and the sextet's short career has reached yet another milestone: being able to capture its angst in a very unorthodox way. When the smoothness of Sade gives way to a sing-along chorus, songs like "Goodbye, Tonight" scream from within and show just how Lostprophets turn up the intensity without cranking the volume. This album will be the measuring stick for 2004. www.lostprophets.com

-Mike SOS



**MADBALL
NYHC EP
THORP**

When you ask any current hardcore band ripping it up these days about its influences, a few names always pop up and one of them is always Madball. Well, thanks to the resurgence of hardcore (with bands like Sworn Enemy and Hatebreed leading the pack while carrying the torch in Madball's absence), the Queens, NY, quartet have mounted a comeback. This four-song EP shows that the boys still have the wares to create the powerful, gritty music that paved the way for the merger of the NYHC and metal scenes. By the looks and sounds of things, Madball stands to reign supreme again as one of the forefathers of hardcore. www.thorprerecords.com

-Mike SOS

www.skratchmagazine.com

listening to music is so delightful

MADCAP



MADCAP UNDER SUSPICION VICTORY

Chances are that, if you like Rancid, Madcap will find a place in your heart, as well. This SoCal punk-rock outfit's latest, 11-track offering strikes quite a few chords with both the punk/ska community and the rock crowd, making UNDER SUSPICION the most well balanced of the band's works. Citing not only the obvious The Clash and The Jam influences but also taking it back to such rock luminaries as Bruce Springsteen and Elvis Costello, Madcap incorporate the big rock sound of the '80s masterfully in such tunes as the reggae-flavored "Under Suspicion" and the rebellious jolt of "Youth Explosion". Yes, the band wears suits and ties and looks like an average skankin' rawk band, but underneath it all lie a lot of heart and solid slabs of melody that make Madcap the street-punk band that you can hum along to. www.victoryrecords.com

-Mike SOS



MAP SECRETS BY THE HIGHWAY VELVET BLUE MUSIC

One of the best dream-pop bands I had heard in a while was The Black Watch. Now, I can easily say that Map is another band to take notice of. SECRETS BY THE HIGHWAY is a beautiful record, combining an intricate, airy sound that's both relaxing and intriguing at the same time. "Beautiful Friend" and "Riverside" are standout songs. They're like the Sunday drive you'd take with your girlfriend on the roads that lead to anywhere. SECRET is a dreamer's album, and that's fine with me.

-Darren Ratner



MEZZANINE-C14 HE KEEPS SILENT AND SACRIFICES HIMSELF BREAK EVEN RECORDS

This creatively-named band claims home to be New Jersey. Not one to go against New Jersey tradition, the group takes a stab at progressive hardcore by adding elements of indie guitar and spastic, distorted vocals. Although the attempt at creativity is noted, there is a huge dynamic from one song to the next. This gave me difficulties when I tried to capture the essence of the band. The songs really have no structure, and it feels as though, instead of seeing the album as a whole, the band has chosen to write each song as totally separate from the rest. This broke the album into pieces, which can only be described, as post-hardcore. If you were to combine Converge with elements from At the Drive-In and Far, the outcome might very well be this band.

-ADF



MIKE MARTT TOMORROW SHINES BRIGHT SUPERSCOPE RECORDS

The solo debut from this veteran Southern California frontman (an ex-guitarist and vocalist for Tex and the Horseheads and Thelonus Monster) is simply one of the best rock albums in recent years. The back-up band has great credentials, also, with ex-members of such bands as The Cult, Jane's Addiction, Lucinda Williams, and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. With a calm, confident style that sounds a lot like good Wallflowers with an edgier singer, Martt puts his heart and soul into 11 classics on this disc. It's hard to pick a standout track off this excellent album. With consistently appealing songwriting that has songs echoing through your head for days, this is the kind of disc you can just leave in your player for weeks on end. www.superscoperecords.com

-DUG



MOJO RIB MOJO RIB NOTHING SACRED

Third-rate AC/DC riff rock complete with double entendres and bland stupidity, you're sure to lose more than a few brain cells after a few spins of this disc. Mojo Rib's snotty, insincere punk-tinged vocals don't contribute much, either, but the band's devil-may-care attitude (brought to fruition by such brainteasers as "Fat Lady with a Gun" and "You Need Rock"), should come with a complementary foam trucker hat. It's that passé, and it may make Lit look like Tool, but the 10 tracks of decadent party rock should be a resounding success at the Friday night frat-house kegger. www.nuthingsacred.com

-Mike SOS



NEKROMANTIX RETURN OF THE LOVING DEAD HELLCAT

After almost two years upon its release date, what better time to bring back the RETURN OF THE LOVING DEAD with the April approach date of Nekromantix's next Hellcat full-length, DEAD GIRLS DON'T CRY? It's psychobilly's own horror-induced version of The Stray Cats. Mixing up the 1950s, classic horror themes and letting the punk, psycho, and rockabilly world collide, these Danish psychobillies are hell on earth, both literally and figuratively speaking. With a trademark stand-up coffin bass, howling vocals, and 13 tracks to match that, this trio seems to be the new leader in the psychobilly world. Any EVIL DEAD fans out there? Nekromantix will bring a new light to the word nekronomicon or should I say, nekronomicon? www.nekromantix.com

-Courtney Riot



NEUTRAL AGREEMENT THE JOYFUL FACADE FUTURE DESTINATION RECORDS

Drawing influences from the likes of Saves the Day, Taking Back Sunday, and The Get Up Kids, Neutral Agreement hasn't created the most original music, but still accomplished a solid and pleasant sound in their second full-length, THE JOYFUL FACADE. A lot of tracks sound similar, surrounded around straightforward indie/pop rock melodies combined, at times, with a heavier, somewhat metal influence. It appears that this band listened to a lot of MxPx before making this album, especially "Slowly going the way of the buffalo". Standout tracks on the album are "The Last Prediction" and "As Words Fall". If you are in the mood for something enjoyably generic and easy to swallow, your quest has ceased.

-Anthony



NEW BOMB TURKS SWITCHBLADE TONGUES, BUTTERKNIFE BRAINS GEARHEAD

The latest full-length release from New Bomb Turks has been described as more of an unreleased "Best of" than an "odds and ends" collection. While a majority of the tracks are unreleased cuts of last year's THE NIGHT BEFORE THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, this 16-track LP/CD features a few remarkable covers, such as Aerosmith's "Chip Away the Stone" and The Devil Dog's "Death of Mighty Joe". It's all hits all the way around with the New Bomb Turks' latest release. Trust me, it's been on heavy rotation ever since I got my hands on it. Also included in their eighth full-length album, the Columbus, OH, punk-underground favorites added a five-minute trailer for the new DVD (scheduled to be released later this year). www.gearheadrecords.com

-Courtney Riot



NO CASH RUN YOUR POCKETS VMS

Fucking insanity is what Nazo (i.e., Nazareth, PA) quartet No Cash unleash on their debut LP. Rightfully referred to as "goblin-core" by VMS honcho Adam, frontman Chris's vocals are demonic, as he venomously spews out one pertinent anti-authority message after another, all atop incredibly fast and unabashedly feral ska-laced hardcore punk. Essential tracks include the absolute crème de la crème "Wilkes-Booth Style", the blasphemous "Pierce the Gates" (with its shouts of "burn a church!"), the God-forsaken "Pure Evil" (on which Chris's frantically squealed vocals are at their most fiendish), and the catchy "Homelife Is a Drag" (which ends with a surprisingly sweet piano coda (a flourish that appears once again during the finale)). And what of the penultimate track, the rap-infused "Gasoline"? You gotta hear it to believe it. All in all, this is one wild ride for fans of bands like Leftover Crack and Against All Authority.

-Janelle Jones



NO MOTIV DAYLIGHT BREAKING VAGRANT RECORDS

Most people are not aware that there exists a secret army bent on the destruction of music as we know it. Depth, passion, and ingenuity are their enemy. You will know them by the use of such phrases as "I'm falling into darkness," "Feel my soul slipping away," and "I think my head would explode if I could ever manage to think of anything but my pathetic failed relationships." The headquarters of this militia is in Santa Monica, CA. It goes by the name "Vagrant Records," and they have a little fighting man in their logo. I AM NOT MAKING THIS SHIT UP. They will not stop until every man and woman wears a neckerchief and every child is issued a No Motiv record at birth.

-Casey Clague



NON-PROPHETS HOPE LEX RECORDS

All right, stop your doin', 'cause Non-Prophets are about to ruin the image of the style that you used to (sorry, perhaps one reader will get that). True hip-hop aficionados will reminisce while Sage Francis ad libs verses (here and there) to songs from Eric B., Rob Base, Das Efx, KRS-1, and A Tribe Called Quest (just to name a handful). At an age when youngsters on the underground scene are unfamiliar with the classics from the golden age of hip-hop, it's refreshing to hear someone bring a little touch of the old into the new. Often compared to Anticon, Non-Prophets boast lyrics like "I go to Fugazi shows and request Minor Threat songs" and "You're stupider than a Pakistani at a Klan rally". Sage even drops lines that mention Michael Moore, Ani DiFranco, and Dancer in the Dark, all backed by Joe Beats tight production. These cats are definitely not down with the mainstream. non-prophets.com

-Jude Ruiz



NO-REFILL NOT ANOTHER SELF TITLED DEBUT ALBUM SELF-RELEASED

This is the type of release that causes the listener to scratch his head and ponder whether or not the band is, by some insane chance, actually serious. After reluctantly listening to NOT ANOTHER SELF TITLED DEBUT ALBUM a handful of times, I reached the conclusion that No-Refill is, in fact, as serious as a heart attack something presumably much more enjoyable than this half-assed venture into rap-metal circa 1997 (though it wouldn't be anymore tolerable then, either). This record's dropped-D redundancy and wildly corny lyrics (whether delivered in the form of nu-metal growls or cheeseball raps) made me fear that a WWE wrestler was going to appear at my doorstep and make a grand entrance by slapping fives all the way down my hallway before kicking down my door and body-slammng me into a bookshelf. This album is enough to make Disturbed blush in embarrassment.

-Dave Kargol



ONE SIX CONSPIRACY WORDS FILL TIME TRIBUNAL RECORDS

One Six Conspiracy are a quartet out of Charlotte, NC, whose brand of infectious pop brings them comparisons to Further Seems Forever, Juliana Theory, Waxwing, and Rocky Votalato. This debut album obviously zeros in on melodies, which are most apparent on tracks like "Just Drive" and "Ephemeral" (when One Six are at their best). The band is not as effective when they try to rock, but that's okay, because there are enough catchy hooks here (as on "Close Your Eyes") to keep you listening. tribunalrecords.com

-Jude Ruiz

i want them to bring back the 8-track.



POLEMIC PLASTIC ON THE MOUTH HOLE ROY G BIV

Polemic is a coed duo from Athens, GA, and their highly experimental songs are no easier to predict than the twists and turns of any dark and unfamiliar highway. Like a partially cooperative mental patient, their behavior is always fleeting and potentially hazardous. Unequal portions of frisky female jingles, sobering lulls, and ferocious outbursts personify PLASTIC ON THE MOUTH HOLE into a jumbled music salad (dressing not included). Here, the band's progressive musicianship fires off in any imaginable number of directions, yet ends up creating a tangent that is truly its own. "Hit Bottom Now" moseys into a steady western romp, only to shatter into shredding yelps and flanging solos. Vocalist McKenna Mackie's Courtney Love-style vocals fluctuate as tired groans duke it out with tortured screams and occasionally vanish unannounced for periods of time. Whether you like it or not, Polemic's experimental art is intriguing and undeniably their own.

-Dave Kargol



PROBOT PROBOT SOUTHERN LORD

This may be the metal album of the decade...and the funny thing about it is that it comes from an artist you'd never expect. Dave Grohl, best known as the drummer for Nirvana, head honcho of Foo Fighters, and everyone's favorite hired gun (just ask Queens of the Stone Age and Killing Joke) has compiled an 11-track metal album that brings real metal back into the spotlight. Grohl's pet project, known as Probot, is an ambitious endeavor, picking up where Black Sabbath's Tony Iommi's latest solo work left off. Grohl wrote and arranged some kick-ass metal tunes, and much like Iommi farmed out the vocals to some of metal's luminary vocalists. The end result is the crushing self-titled album that reads like a who's who of metal. Listing in order of appearance: Cronos (Venom), Max Calavera (Sepultura), Lemmy (Motorhead), Mike Dean (COC), Kurt Brecht (DRI), Lee Dorrian (Cathedral), Wino (The Obsessed), Spirit Caravan, Tom G. Warrior (Celtic Frost), Snake (Voivod), Eric Wagner (Trouble), and last but not least, the majestic King Diamond lend their talents to one of the most engaging metal releases in recent memory. A must-have for any self-respecting metal fan, Probot hits all sects of metal and may garnish Grohl the respect he richly deserves as a true musical genius. www.southernlord.com

-Mike SOS



RAUNCHY CONFUSION BAY NUCLEAR BLAST RECORDS

Here comes Raunchy, Europe's answer to the melodic metal craze that has swept the U.S. metal scene. The band would do well opening for the likes of Slipknot, since it shares many common traits with that already-famous radio band. Elements of Norwegian black metal can be traced in the synth samples, yet the rest of the music is a derivative of progressive metal and hardcore. Catchy, melodic choruses meant to capture the listener offer a decent dynamic from the brutal screaming, but they lack definition. The lyrics seem very pensive, although the artwork coincides with the title: CONFUSION BAY.

-ADF



RESCUE VOLUMEPLUS VOLUMEPLUS FORGE AGAIN

Combining elements of math rock, post-punk, screamo, and post-hardcore, Rescue's first full-length, VOLUMEPLUS VOLUMEPLUS, is released from Forge Again with a bonus disc of their EP EVEN PEOPLE AND NOT THE ODDS. Enlisting the help of reputable producers, this relatively young band from Detroit is able to craft a mixture of seemingly irreconcilable sub-genres to produce a release that is truly likeable and impressive. Besides the high-quality music on this release, you get two discs with your purchase, allowing you to enjoy the full catalog of Rescue releases with limited purchasing activity. What more can you ask for?! www.forgeagainrecords.com

-tChow



wannabe reviewer: Jennifer Moncayo

CDS IN MY PLAYER THIS MONTH: Cock Sparrer, Bouncing Souls, The Ramones, Stiff Little Fingers,

The Briefs

BEST GIFT FOR VALENTINE'S DAY IS: a good kiss

I LOVE: del taco, sleeping late, drinking, going to shows, chile corn nuts



RETCONNED GAME SOUNDS STICKFIGURE

Sometimes, groups create weird music for the sake of being weird. GAME SOUNDS is definitely in the top 10. Just picture Trent Reznor tripping on acid with Orgy. The beats and rhythm are strictly of the Atari/Coleco Vision persuasion, with bleeps, blops, bangs, and buzzing pervading. It's actually nothing to scoff at if you're into music that teeters on unearthly; you just don't search for this in the punk or rock rack.

-Darren Ratner



REVENGE CITY S/T RIDGEMONT RECORDS

Revenge City is just on the verge of hitting it big. It has a loyal fanbase, a tour in the works, and have recently won a contest put on by America Online. Not bad for a band that's only been around for a little under two years. Vocally, the bands sounds a lot like a mixture of Blink 182 and Face to Face. I was able to look past the obvious Blink 182 similarities and hear a band that seems to be trying to throw all of their influences together in a bowl, mix it up, and see what happens. At times, the songs sound a bit forced, but on "A Pistol, A Rifle, And A Shotgun" and "Blingo", Revenge City show what it can be with a little more experience and a chance to create its own identity. There's also a decent cover of "Bikeage" to close out the record.

-Dane Jackson



ITTER SIX DEGREES OF VARIATION JUMP START RECORDS

From the beginning of the opening track "Free", I knew I was in for a treat. Ritter's SIX DEGREES OF VARIATION just oozes with energy. Not only that, but these Pennsylvanians break the tradition punk rock mold and create a nice little hybrid of pop punk, hardcore, rock, and melody. Usually on albums, bands try and create a certain sound that can connect each song together. It seems like Ritter didn't want to do that because each song sounds like it could have come from a different band. If you think about it, that sounds like a stupid decision, but it works very well for Ritter. Not only is it a chance for them to show off its talent, but it also makes this release have something for everyone. With a polished sound that was due to the production of Nick Rotundo and the overflowing talent of these guys, SIX DEGREES OF VARIATION is one of the first must have releases of the year. Might as well get it now so you can have more scene points later. Also, on a personal note, I have to give these guys tons of credit for taking my favorite author's words and turning them into a great song. It really adds a different perspective to his writing.

-Dane Jackson



ROCK CITY MORGUE SOME GHOULS ANTIDOTE

Coming straight out of New Orleans, a land of voodoo and debauchery, Rock City Morgue are five punks who can't get enough of horror movies and The Cramps. This EP is a great preview for what's to come from these guys. It's a little-known fact that Sean Yseult from White Zombie plays bass in this band! Well, the songs have an old-school sound to them, but with a touch of rockabilly. Let's say they sound like The Ramones, The Cramps, and Black Magic all mixed together. If you're into the genre of horror-punk, or willing to try something new, I'd suggest picking up this disc.

-Hibbard



RUNNAMUCKS OF A DIFFERENT BREED SIX WEEKS

Runnamucks is a thrashing force of antagonizing, in-your-face, electrifying music set to blow you away bit by bit. OF A DIFFERENT BREED captures 14 tracks of hardcore, punk-infused thrash that will continuously make your body rock. Favorites off the album include "Gotta Get a Grip", "In for the Kill", "D-R-A-G", and "When I Feel Like I'm Halfway Here". It's a new sound for me to grasp on to, and I'm loving every second of it! Listening to this album gives me a mental picture of what a Runnamucks show would be like: complete chaos. www.runnamucks.com

-Courtney Riot



SADAHARU ANTHEM FOR NEW SONIC WARFARE CL

Sadaharu is an adventurously well-versed rock band that likes playing and composing edgy music that has no problem holding the hammer of the gods, yet contains the jazzy undertones of Fugazi or At the Drive-In. On the quartet's smarter-than-most 10 tracks, the twin-guitar attack weaves interesting melodic tapestries of sound, while the bass and drums play locked away somewhere in the distance. When put together, tracks like the sly "Absinthe Makes the Heart Grow fonder" become hypnotic anthems that blend hardcore, indie punk, and noise rock into one clever concoction. www.clrecords.com

-Mike SOS

i wrote better lyrics in third grade.



SALLY'S GAP MONKEY BONE INVISIBLE MASS RECORDS

Arizona ska veterans The Poland Brothers team up with Johnny the Fox and Jason Bond on this disc to put out one of the year's best albums as Sally's Gap. Johnny and Jason are old pros when it comes to Celtic music, and the mixture of ska with Irish folk is infectious and addicting. With 17 brilliant tracks utilizing bagpipes, Irish flutes, and accordion, the musicians mug their way through this music with a smile and an insidious leer. There are some strange, creepy moments with the between-track voiceovers and some very refreshing whisky songs. This music is all about good times, drink, good friends, drink, sex, and lots of drinking songs. Of course the band puts a great rendition of "Drunken Sailor" on the album, along with a great female vocalist for the final song, "Stolli's Tune". This is a classic for any fan of Celtic music.

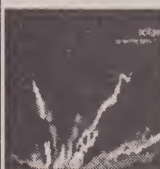
-DUG



SCARS OF TOMORROW ROPE TIED TO THE TRIGGER VICTORY

California metalcore troupe Scars of Tomorrow's 11-track debut provides all the necessary elements for a crushing introduction. This quintet blend menacing mosh parts that give Swedish death-metal a run for their money with Dethones-esque breakdowns on songs like "Break the Fall", yet ROPE TIED TO THE TRIGGER has its fair share of chugging guitars and buzzsaw rhythms in full effect on tracks like "Abandonment". These traits, plus the production skills of Converge's Kurt Ballou, give Scars of Tomorrow a versatility that many of the group's peers don't enjoy. The perfect blend of East meets West metalcore? You be the judge... but be prepared to get pummeled in the process. www.victoryrecords.com

-Mike SOS



SCIFLYER FAIR WEATHER KARMA CLAIRECORDS

After quasi-vocalist Steve Kennedy's first band, Estuary, decided to call it quits after one show, he teamed up with his wife Kim and formed Avrocar. After acquiring a new drummer and a new name, Sciflyer was born. If you ask me, a change of style would have been good for them but no one asked me, so let's leave it up to you. If you think lyrics have no place in music, like repetitive sounds recorded at low quality, and have an hour to kill, then FAIR WEATHER KARMA is perfect for you. For this type of music, where the vocals are few and far between, the music should be damn near amazing. But they forgot to write good music. And even if they hadn't, their eight-track recorder would not do it any justice. I think I'll pass.

-Joe Wilson



SEA OF TOMBS SEA OF TOMBS GRAVITY

Sea of Tombs are a psychedelic garage-rock trio who spit out wailing instrumental jams and avoid studio polish as if it were rat poison. The band is steadfast in their bare-bones approach, as the entirety of this six-song LP sounds as if it were recorded in a giant shoebox. This is, without a doubt, organic rock 'n' roll, free of the additives we consume so regularly. And although we're all admittedly fans of exceptionally-recorded albums and studio fanfare, it's kind of nice to see quality rock in its skeletal form. Here, high-string doodlings float atop grungy rhythms and inspire visions of swirling tie-dye colors and scraggly hippies dancing around a distant and blazing bonfire. This self-titled release plays like a single, uncut jam session (all but one song break the seven-minute mark). Although these tracks seem less like individual units than slices of the same pie, they're delectable nonetheless.

-Dave Kargol



SEEKONK FOR BARBARA LEE KIMCHEE RECORDS

The debut album from this Portland, ME, quintet is the type of disc that makes you want to pound your head against the wall just to wake up. This is a band that makes Radiohead sound like a speed-metal group. The incredible effort expended by these musicians just to change a chord makes one wonder: Why bother? This CD seems like one long endless loop of slow, boring noise. Perhaps the album could be added to digital alarm clocks as one of the "white noise" sleep tracks. The press for this band would like to have them compared to Pink Floyd or The Velvet Underground, but those bands actually had songs. To their credit, the members of this band do play some interesting instruments on the album, such as a theremin, xylophone, and cello, but all the weird instruments in the world won't make a song out of a series of endless noodling. See Konk. See Konk jam (real slowly). See Konk learn (to write a song). See Konk succeed. www.kimchee.records

-DUG



SEROTONIN FUTURE ANTERIOR BIFOCAL MEDIA

The 12th and highly-anticipated release from mid-'90s rock band Serotonin has produced quite possibly their most audience-friendly work thus far. Deeming themselves a high-speed math-punk band from Tennessee, Serotonin calculated some intense tracks for this recent release. Lead singer Andrew Walker's vocals are fresh and young, but the overall sound produced by these Southern rockers are anything but young. Having clearly developed their sound and fluidity as a group, FUTURE ANTERIOR is an album for all. The bass and drum beats keep the pace, while vocals arouse the listener from track to track.

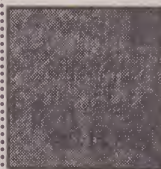
-Carley Charpentier



SICK OF IT ALL LIFE ON THE ROPES FAT WRECK CHORDS

The myth, the legend, the Sick of It All. The infamous hardcore-punk fiends are at it again. The latest installment in a brutal career has not disappointed this avid fan. Still pissed off at the world and not afraid to show it, the band has once again put out a solid hardcore-induced punk album that gives you the urge to kick someone in the face. Obviously pissed off at the constant commercialism of the punk movement, track 4, "Paper Tiger (Fakin' the punk)", is an angry reply to witnessing of a great underground scene slowly eating itself away. This track is my personal favorite. If you're a punk or hardcore fan and still haven't bought any Sick of It All records, this release would be a good start.

-ADF



SINCE THE FLOOD VALOR AND VENGEANCE IRONCLAD

Hardcore has always been music for the oppressed to lash out against the establishment in the most brutal form possible, and new jacks Since the Flood run with that ideal throughout the quintet's 10-track release. This Massachusetts-based group's debut release falls right in with the lot of East Coast, tough-guy, chugga-chugga, screaming hardcore with nuggets of lyrics that scream of defiance and overcoming life's obstacles. Since the Flood's hardcore offering should make fans of bands like Full Blown Chaos, Unerath, and Bury Your Dead very happy, as it encompasses the passion and power that these bands possess without sounding derivative. www.ironcladrecordings.com

-Mike SOS



SKARE TACTIC REMEMBER WHEN THORP

Skare Tactic is an amazing group of individuals who are completely aware and in control of exactly the type of heavy music they're creating. They are straight-up East Coast hardcore with a sound similar to Death Threat and Madball. The bottom line is: there's nothing to dislike about these guys. The vocals are extremely rough and not for the light-hearted, while the riffs are even more brutal and guaranteed to feed you a heaping dose of old-fashioned hardcore. Anyone who owns some Agnostic Front, Hatebreed, and Sick of It All albums is going to want to own this "diamond in the rough" of a disc from a band that deserves more credit than it gets. Look out for their shows coming up soon.

-Hibbard



STAMPIN' GROUND A NEW DARKNESS UPON US CENTURY MEDIA

Stampin' Ground's latest record, A NEW DARKNESS UPON US, is considered to be (by Century Media standards) the band's "latest masterpiece." Well, not exactly. It's not that this U.K. quintet can't wail. This is some pretty potent metal, whether you're listening to "Killer of Society", "Don't Need a Reason To Hate", or other tracks. The only issue is that you can get the same grimy jolt when listening to anything by Pantera.

-Darren Ratner

wannabe reviewer: Anthony

CDS IN MY PLAYER THIS MONTH: From Ashes Rise-Nightmares, Desert City Soundtrack-Funeral Car, Offspring-Splinter, Red Animal War-Breaking in an Angel, Fear Before The March of Flames-Odd How People Shake

BEST GIFT FOR VALENTINE'S DAY IS: a kiss accompanied with concert tickets

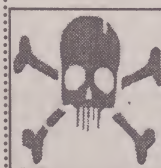
I LOVE: listening to music at night while driving on a secluded road, snow, indie theatres, making someone smile, boycotting Hallmark for creating Valentine's Day.



SEEKONK FOR BARBARA LEE KIMCHEE RECORDS

The debut album from this Portland, ME, quintet is the type of disc that makes you want to pound your head against the wall just to wake up. This is a band that makes Radiohead sound like a speed-metal group. The incredible effort expended by these musicians just to change a chord makes one wonder: Why bother? This CD seems like one long endless loop of slow, boring noise. Perhaps the album could be added to digital alarm clocks as one of the "white noise" sleep tracks. The press for this band would like to have them compared to Pink Floyd or The Velvet Underground, but those bands actually had songs. To their credit, the members of this band do play some interesting instruments on the album, such as a theremin, xylophone, and cello, but all the weird instruments in the world won't make a song out of a series of endless noodling. See Konk. See Konk jam (real slowly). See Konk learn (to write a song). See Konk succeed. www.kimchee.records

-DUG



SLOKA SLAP HAPPY! ALL YOU CAN EAT MUSIC

I wasn't sure what to expect when I put this CD in my computer. I can see the punk influence in Sloka, but I definitely wouldn't put it into the punk genre. It's the typical rock band with a light punk influence. Fast drums, fast guitar riffs, and mediocre vocals/lyrics. I had to retract my opinion once I reached song 6, "Remnants". The small drum breakdowns during the chorus followed by an insane guitar solo made me want to dance! Immediately following, "Locked Out" became a new favorite. The chorus is catchy as hell. So while they display the characteristics that could define them as a mediocre punk influenced band, let me reassure you: this band has songs that are so odd in structure that it's too catchy to forget! How could you not want to move your body while listening to something like this? www.allyoucaneatmusic.com

-Courtney Riot

when a cd is great, i get all giggly gavy.

STAMPIN' GROUND/NORTH SIDE KINGS ALLIED FORCES SPLIT CD THORP

What a great split: England's Stampin' Ground and America's North Side Kings cover a bunch of essential hardcore/thrash bands, like the godly D.R.I., Agnostic Front, S.O.D., Suicidal Tendencies, and the fucking Cro-Mags, to name a few. Whereas SG solely offer up covers, NSK crank out one original tune, the pummeling "Home of the Brave". Along with their S.O.D. choice of "Fuck the Middle East" and the "Don't fuck around with America!" quote in the liner

notes, there's no question where NSK's allegiance lies. Anyway, a testament to the enduring legacy and enormous influence these pioneering acts have had on today's hardcore/metal bands, this is just a tremendous release for anyone longing to hear updated versions of classics like "I'd Rather Be Sleeping" and "Malfunction" and a fine crash course for neophytes who have a penchant for today's hardcore to get schooled in how it all began.

-Janelle Jones



STILL LIFE THE INCREDIBLE SINKING FEELING GREYDAY PRODUCTIONS

The third full-length release from Los Angeles emo veterans Still Life is a sad but powerful affair that delivers the band's music like a soft sucker punch to the gut. With songs like "Greet the Bringer of Pain", "Abandon Hope All Who Enter", and "Godforsaken", this is definitely not the feel-good album of the year. The starkly beautiful album art and liner dedications to "all those we have lost along the way" reinforces the feeling of loss and separation. While the band's

bleak outlook matches well its hardcore emo approach, there's only so much pain one person can stand. This album is best listened to after a nice day in the sun or before a trip to an amusement park. That way, the listener can appreciate the dark beauty of this disc without launching into some downward spiral. It's also probably not a good gift idea for that manic depressive friend of yours.

www.greydayproductions.com

-DUG



SUFFERING AND THE HIDEOUS THIEVES ALL MY FRIENDS ARE ON PROZAC LUJO RECORDS

If Suffering and the Hideous Thieves speak loudly to a depressed nation with ALL MY FRIENDS ARE ON PROZAC, you might need a small fix after hearing this one. It's definitely an honest EP, with four tracks of dark, sneering music that put you in a zombie-like state. "Immaculate Sound of Infiniti", in particular, marches on with this '80s-horror-flick sensation. The wavy guitars, robotic vocals and intermittent-yet-creepy audio make it into a wacky

dream. Give this a try then call your therapist.

-Darren Ratner



THE BAD APPLES NEVER TASTED SO GOOD SHE SELLS RECORDS

These girls could really go places. Singer Sarah B. is a bratty chick with her sex on a platter next to her tongue-in-cheek angst. The songs on NEVER TASTED SO GOOD are loose but loaded to the roof with "go for it" attitude. I dig the songs "Rock Star", "Phone Sex", and "Shitty People". Hailing from Austin, TX, The Bad Apples rock it cool and raw.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



wannabe reviewer: Luke Skywalker

CDS IN MY PLAYER THIS MONTH: The Black Heart Procession-Three, Tomahawk-Mit Gas, Heads Will Roll-Extrapolate the Meaning, Unwed Sailor-Faithful Anchor, A Silver Mount Zion-He Has Left Us Alone...

BEST GIFT FOR VALENTINE'S DAY IS: Someone who really and truly loves you.

I LOVE: www.cloakanddaggersmedia.com, Jeff Wright, The memory of Jell-o gelitan popsicles (circa 1987), the right to share music, Mitch Hedberg

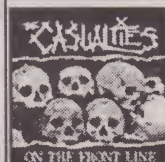


TEE-M MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY SELF-RELEASED

This single from Pakistani expatriate Tee-M (Tariq Mirza) is the true chronicle of a man who has been stranded at the Paris airport for 15 years. Currently, Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg are working on a movie, TERMINAL, about Merham Nasser, the man at the airport. Tee-M's Pakistani upbringing is evident in the lyrics with lines like "Some days are like hell, like playing on a sticky wicket." Only a cricket fan would toss in a reference like that. The song is nice, acoustic-based, first-person ballad that tells of the daily life at the Charles De Gaulle airport. Hopefully, Spielberg will get a copy of the tune and toss Tee-M a few bucks for rights. Currently, Tee-M is a popular act in the Los Angeles club scene (where fans can obtain a free copy of the disc from the artist himself).

www.geocities.com/tmGig

-DUG



THE CASUALTIES ON THE FRONT LINE SIDEONEDUMMY

What can I say? I'm guilty of it! Years back, I went through a stage of music that screamed "street punk." This, of course, included the crusty street gods themselves, The Casualties. Luckily, that was only a phase. Now the only bands remotely close that I'll give respect to are Defiance, Clit 45, The Unseen, and a handful of others. Why? Because they have talent. I am impressed, though. The Casualties latest release is a musical revolution (for them)! It's more complex, creating a new musical sound. While that's true, the vocals still screech the same gibberish as on previous albums. For a group of guys that spend more time on their hair than I do and wear more expensive clothes than all of my friends combined, they should step off of the political ladder and focus on another subject. Until then, they are just another pseudo-political punk band. Oi! www.thecasualties.net

-Courtney Riot



THE GRAVEYARD BOULEVARD TOE TAGS & BODY BAGS ANTIDOTE RECORDS

This record makes me want to kill myself. Somewhere between Slipknot and EVIL DEAD, the band tries to pull off a very Gothic/vampire type of look. The CD layout is generic, and the band's attempt to look Gothic/hardcore comes off as ridiculous. If music was about image, then this band would be the music equivalent of a Kevin Costner film. To reinforce the horrible choice in image, the band's music lives up to the expectations. Somewhere between medium-tempo glam rock and really bad punk, there is nothing on this album that is worth a damn. Maybe the band should live up to its own prophecy and commit mass suicide.

-ADF



THE GO SELF-TITLED LIZARD KING RECORDINGS

Rock 'n' roll is seeping out of the pours of The Go. Electric guitar and driving percussion are reminiscent of '60s and early '70s rock. The Go have stepped apart from the plethora of "The" bands and transcended past the confines of cookie-cutter garage rock. The refreshing sound of true rock 'n' roll should make even the money-hungry corporate rock bands want to get back in the van and find the true meaning of rock 'n' roll. The GO breathes life into a fluttering rock scene and is a strong move in the right direction for music. This album has lived up to the Lizard King name and would definitely make Jim Morrison proud.

-Kevin Conway



THE JUNIOR VARSITY THE GREAT COMPROMISE BRITISH RECORDS

Eh, The Junior Varsity don't differentiate themselves that much from the hoards of pop-punk/emo acts out there. Sure, they put loads of passion and heart into each offering but don't they all? This Chicago-based five-piece are reminiscent of bands like Spitalfield, Armor for Sleep, The Goodwill, and The Snake the Cross the Crown, as their debut full-length is dominated by emotive vocals and intertwining guitar work atop a steady rhythm section. Basically, they're good at what they do, but this genre is super saturated already, and it takes a lot to stand out from the pack...and with THE GREAT COMPROMISE, The Junior Varsity just haven't raised the bar.

-Janelle Jones



THE KIDS OF WIDNEY HIGH ACT YOUR AGE MOON MAN RECORDS

The third full-length release from Michael Monagan's special-education students is an exuberant and unapologetic blast of life. With volunteer musicians backing the student-written songs, the listener is treated to a perspective of life most often swept under the rug. The poignant "Miss Understood" tells the story of life spent in a wheelchair, the cruel looks and callous disregard that seem to permeate society. Other songs touch on subjects rarely considered by mainstream musicians such as "Life Without the Cow", "Santa's in a Wheelchair", and "Two Faces of Fidel". The boisterous "short bus" chorus that powers these songs can't help but make you smile and just feel glad to be alive. The human spirit can't be crushed, and The Kids of Widney High prove that society has a lot to learn from those it would rather not acknowledge. www.kidsofwidneyhigh.com

-DUG



THE L-10 PROJECT LIVE @ THE CROOKED BAR SELF-RELEASED

Have you ever sat around with buddies for hours on end with acoustic guitar in hand putting your jokes to song? Almost everyone has been there, and last March two punks did just that and recorded it for the world to hear. The L-10 Project is comprised of Barry ("The Bear"), who sings offbeat compositions about ostrich hotdogs and penguins taking over the world; and Mike (Mistah Slutz), who plays acoustic guitar. Don't let the acoustics and their emo name fool you: this album is full of laughs fueled by strange subject matter and awkward silences, and it's sure to make anyone with a sense of humor laugh. You can pick up your own copy of this crazed performance at www.olivejuicemusic.com

-Breanne Dunn



THE LITTLE KILLERS THE LITTLE KILLERS CRYPT RECORDS

Crypt Records breaks a releasing hiatus of over five years to put out this furious band in the sonic tradition of New York Dolls. The rhythm section of this trio (Kari (drums) and Sara (bass)) actually belongs to the gender most known for lipstick. Vocalist/guitarist Andy has a delivery reminiscent of David Johansen that really makes the New York Dolls comparison, especially on tracks like the Mae West invitation "Come On Up". Listening to the group do this Rascals cover makes one think New York Dolls should have seen the fit and covered it themselves. The rest of the tracks are originals from this New York band and follow in a great NYC rock 'n' roll tradition.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

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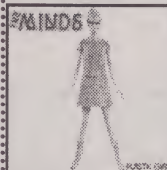
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THE LIVING END
REPRISE

MODERN ARTILLERY, The Living End's follow-up to ROLL ON, is an ambitious, creative endeavor. To wit, these Australian stalwarts of the scene sprinkle the record with numerous styles, from the expected punk leanings found on opener "What Would You Do?" to some great rockabilly-saturated tunes like "End of the World" and the rowdy, unsurpassable "Hold Up"; poppy, upbeat numbers, such as the good-time "Short Notice" with its '50s rock 'n' roll feel and the staccato-guitar infused "Jimmy"; more subdued fare, like "Maitland Street", the mellow "Putting You Down", and the rather sedate (at times) "The Room" (which even features some ska beats in there clocking in at an epic-like eight minutes. It's quite a powerful closer); and even a country-drenched ditty, "So What", proving that, for this hard-rocking trio, nothing's off-limits.

-Janelle Jones



THE MINDS
PLASTIC GIRLS
DIRT NAP RECORDS

The Minds have merged synth new wave and punk with ease. PLASTIC GIRLS is a great, fun, rocking disc. The Minds line-up goes like this: Mikey Mind, Cera Bella Palsy, The Thinker, The Cortex, and Bobby Brains. I think that says it all. The Minds got balls to go all the way with that concept. Some of the standout tunes include "Forbidden Friend", "Smash Smash Smash!", and "Don't Touch". PLASTIC GIRLS is inventive, entertaining, and

raw on the edges. Go get it.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



THE REDEMPTION SONG
PLAYS DEAD IN STEREO
FUTURE DESTINATION

The Redemption Song is, without a doubt, one of the best of the recent hardcore bands! PLAYS DEAD IN STEREO is a brilliant full-length debut, featuring 10 hardcore, destructive punk anthems. With grueling tracks such as "After Years of Dreaming", "Open Your Eyes", "Summer of Love", and "MIA", you can feel the blood, sweat, rage, and passion that flow throughout the entire CD. It's a collection of fierce sing-alongs from beginning to end!

Although it's said The Redemption Song draw influences from bands like Refused and AFI, that does not come close to giving these boys justice! They are on their own level, setting their own rules, and bringing the hardcore and punk world together in a new way. PLAYS DEAD IN STEREO is a CD the punk kids will be calling punk, the hardcore kids will be calling hardcore, and that will corrupt anyone and anything in between. www.theredemptionsong.com

-Courtney Riot



THE SPACEWURM
SEE YOU LATER OSCILLATOR
GRAVITY RECORDS

The basic music of The Spacewurm is semi-minimalistic cold wave with stereo panning. By itself, it is creepy and moody...but perhaps not highly interesting. However, this is just the frame for typified or actual phone recordings that make the pieces compelling pieces of raw, guerrilla social anthropology. For instance, "This Person is a Man" is an audio collage of male sexual want ads accessed through a phone system. "Guilt and Money and Money and Love"

takes its title from a moment of lucid analysis by a woman scorned in a conversation with her estranged lover as they try to untangle their lives. Another standout is "Mack". Is the jet-setting comedian a player or Mr. Right?

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



THE STREET WALKIN' CHEETAHS
GAINESVILLE
TRIPLE X RECORDS

GAINESVILLE is a rock 'n' roll storybook about the road and the dramas, traumas, and emotional danger of being a band in a cyclic adventure. GAINESVILLE is a great rock disc on near masterwork. The songs vary from acoustic classic rockers to turbo syncopated punk. Hollywood's The Street Walkin' Cheetahs document a dark reality and do it without sounding self-pitying or pertentious. What the band has done is put together an excellent collection of

songs and that's what an album is, after all. GAINESVILLE is rock done with emotion and balls.

-H. Barry Zimmerman

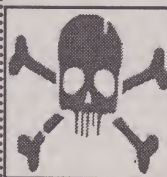


THE THRILLS
SO MUCH FOR THE CITY
VIRGIN

When I first caught a snippet of this CD, I was about ready to toss it, just assuming it was another dorky Brady Bunch cover band. With "ooh wah" choruses and psychedelic Beach Boys vocals, I had to give it a minute before it hit me: this is a great CD. With relaxed lyrics and mellow instrumentals, SO MUCH FOR THE CITY is a perfect choice for that roadtrip along PCH in the middle of summer. While The Thrills won't likely thrill any hardcore fans,

their first full-length album is soon to be a beach-bum necessity.

-Carley Charpentier



THE VINDICTIVES
ORIGINAL MASTERS (1990-1992)
TEAT PRODUCTIONS

Featuring Joey Vindictive on vocals and Ben Weasel on rhythm axe and backing vocals, ORIGINAL MASTERS (1990-1992) is a collection of 7" EP records that have never appeared on disc until now. The songs are good, solid pop-punk without sounding clichéd or typical. Mostly under three minutes long, the songs are catchy and contain great fun attitude and cool as hell guitar hooks from Dr. Bob. Also, Joey Vindictive's voice is raw, strong-lunged, bratty,

caustic, and just plain rocking. This disc is cool and worth every dime you'll pay. Go get it.

-H. Barry Zimmerman

close-minded people are morons.



THE ZIGGENS
GREATEST ZITS
CORNERSTONE RECORDING ARTS SOCIETY
After 15 years of country rehash, sleazy surf tunes, Trini Lopez inspirations, and marching-band sensibilities, one of the most creative and insane bands of our time has released a greatest-hits compilation for their fans. This two-disc set is packed with fan favorites such as it Took My Mom to the Prom, Pistol Petie, and Big Salty Tears, along with 12 other hits on one disc; and then a complete 14-song disc of surf classics. Two of the surf tunes, iSurfini Buena

Park and iOn & Oni, are new and previously-unreleased. The Ziggens truly are one of if not THE-funniest bands ever. This album is a great gift for any drugged-out surfer friends you might have-or maybe even just anyone with a sense of humor. Be sure to log on to their highly entertaining fan site at www.cornerstoneras.com to find out the history of this quirky outfit. You can even obtain the exclusive and collectible The Ziggens limited edition paper dolls (if you have a printer and a pair of scissors).

-DUG



THE BACKUP PLAN
DEAREST WHOMEVER
NEW DAY RISING

First thing that deserves recognition is the stellar lyrics. Lines like "If love is war, then we're all casualties" were hidden amongst the hardcore screams and pounding drum beats, but were nevertheless important. The Backup Plan takes melodic hardcore punk to a new level and rock through an incredible 12-track trip. Songs like "Looks Like I'm Back on Suicide Watch" scream through emotions and realistic break-ups. DEAREST WHOMEVER is a perfect

example of guys spilling out their guts while using their meanest and scariest voice to play the tough guy. The moral of the story: the guys in The Backup Plan are tender, but boy, can they rock.

-Carley Charpentier



THE CAN UTILITY
POWER 0.42
POP FACTION RECORDS

On the band's first EP, POWER 0.42, Richmond, VA's The Can Utility boasts an energy that seems to dip and dive. Fronted by guitarist/vocalist Billy Davis (who provides some of the growls) and Noelle Schintzius (who keeps a pace of lighter vocals), the group moves back and forth from vigorous rhythms to slightly slower ones. It's the same way throughout the record, never deviating from that norm.

-Darren Ratner



THE MOVIES
IN ONE ERA OUT THE OTHER
GERN BLANDSTEN

A nine-bedroom home outside of Boston is the site where the first breaths of The Movies' life as a band were taken. As the story goes, house rules stipulated "No practice after 11 p.m.!" although the busy lives of the band's members prevented them from playing anytime before the house's audio cutoff point. As a result, they refer to themselves as "the softest punk band in the world," which isn't entirely inaccurate. Their music is better described, however, as

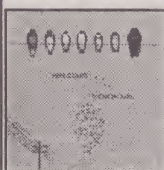
composed and steady, flowing with slow-strumming guitars and the British-inspired voiceovers of vocalist Timothy James. His monotone voice, which croons over the band's gentle keys and modest percussion, is reminiscent of The Cure and Joy Division. IN ONE ERA OUT THE OTHER is ardently recommended for connoisseurs of the softer side of the Brit-pop spectrum. Put on your finest robe, light up a pipe, and enjoy.

-Dave Kargol



wannabe reviewer: tChow

CDS IN MY PLAYER THIS MONTH: Mae-Destination:Beautiful, The Faint-Blankwave Arcade, The Good Life-Novena on a Nocturn, Saves the Day-Stay What You Are
BEST GIFT FOR VALENTINE'S DAY IS: Geoff
I LOVE: Jesus, food, music, books, Diesel



THE MONOLITH
HERE COMES THE MONOLITH
FORTUNE RECORDS

Reminiscent of The Beatles and Elliot Smith, The Monolith is an indie-rock band with some typical indie-rock characteristics...and some not. Dreamy vocals permeate all nine tracks of HERE COMES THE MONOLITH, creating vocal harmonies that will stick in your head for a long time. But the bread and butter for The Monolith is their emphasis on straightforward pop melodies and hooks, while incorporating a wide variety of instruments (the repertoire consisting of acoustic guitars, electric piano, keyboard, cello, viola, violin, trumpet, flugelhorn, and trombone). All these instruments generate a full, flowing sound that leaves you with a relaxing, carefree feeling. Overall, this album is upbeat, imaginative, and of great sound quality.

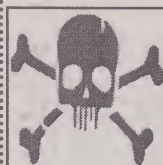
-Anthony



THE REASON
THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH RUNNING
LONELY TREE RECORDS

Formerly known as Sewing with Nancie, members of The Reason haven't completely abandoned their pop-punk roots but definitely have emphasized a more overall punk sound, along with adding elements of hardcore, as well. THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH RUNNING offers six songs changing between fast and energetic punk sections, poppy sing-along choruses, and thick, heavy breakdowns. Surprisingly, they pull off this fusion of genres very well, always keeping a tight and balanced sound and never sounding dull. Along with the lead vocals, screaming is incorporated in various songs, adding to the overall intensity. Add interesting lyrics to the mix and it quickly becomes apparent this band is for real, and comparisons made to Thrive, Good Riddance, and The Used don't seem so far-fetched at all.

-Anthony



THE STRETCH MARXXX
HIGH HEELS AND A HANGOVER
SELF-RELEASED

This Kansas City trio is a new-wave/glam-punk nightmare somewhat akin to (at times) Babes in Toyland. I must admit that I've got a soft spot for chicks with guitars (it's not just me, right?). The Stretch Marxxx surpassed my initial expectations. The group features Brian Lynn on drums, and Camila Medula Oblongata and Venus A.M. Goldstarr tag team the lead vocals to perfection. With dual harmonies, these girls can sound like sex kittens and riot grrls in the same verse (apparent on "Motorcycle"). Sounding ever so coyly and bratty, The Stretch Marxxx belt out catchy riffs and lyrics like "get down on your knees and start to lick." Amen. thestretchmarxxx.com

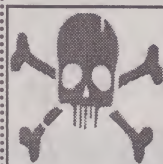
-Jude Ruiz



THE VAGIANTS
SHORT AND HARD
SIN KLUB ENTERTAINMENT

The VaGiants deliver nine songs of badly-recorded garage rock with more genitalia references than the boys' bathroom at a middle school. The singer alternates between wailing annoyingly and attempting to sound sultry...and isn't pulling any of it off. She's sultry like the woman at the end of the bar in the bad part of town who's been drinking since last Tuesday. The musicianship is sloppy. The songs can be called rock 'n' roll, but only in its most basic form and devoid of any creativity or style. Parts of this CD remind me of Tia Carrere's band from WAYNE'S WORLD, so at least The VaGiants have humor working in their favor (though I don't think it was intentional). This should go over real well with fans of Miller High Life beer and fart jokes.

-Casey Clague



THE VINDICTIVES
MUSAK FOR ROBOTS
TEAT RECORDS

The back of this disc says it all: "This album consists of 21 songs, 61 minutes of instrumental music. No guitars, acoustic instruments or vocals were used in the making of this album. This is 100% non-organic." MUSAK FOR ROBOTS is indeed just that, though I've found that this also makes adequate listening for humans, as well. This Kraftwerk-esque album is not something you would listen to at a club or in the car (in other words, nothing you would want to give your undivided attention to), though this could provide some background noise while you do some homework...or, say, write a CD review! At times, MUSAK FOR ROBOTS is a little sparse (though not pretentious). Come to think of it, couldn't I make this kind of racket with my Moog and my Casio? thevindictives.com

-Jude Ruiz



THE VINDICTIVES
CURIOUS ODDITIES AND THE BARE ESSENTIALS
TEAT PRODUCTIONS

The Vindictives have been come together with Teat Productions to re-release tracks that are out of print and only on vinyl on this compilation album of past work. The garage-punk rock leaves nothing for the imagination. The recording and sound is that of a punk-rock band that doesn't give a shit about what anyone thinks. This album is accompanied by driving bass lines, fast drums, some rock 'n' roll guitar, and high-pitched, scratchy, vocals. This album is a soundtrack for punk-rock house parties and doing the pogo. True punk rock in its original form is packed into this compilation that breathes a breath of much-needed fresh air into the punk-rock scene. House parties will be thankful!

-Kevin Conway

close-minded people are morons.



TIMBER!
CIRCLE THE WAGONS!
REASON Y RECORDS
A lot can happen in three songs. This Big Apple trio drives this point far beyond home with this short-but-sweet specimen of pioneering instrumentalism done right. Their side-door approach to math-rock favors patient yet twisted progression in lieu of spastic insanity ("Circle The Wagons!" sounds how Hella might if slowed down to 33 RPM). Here, cymbal crashes and snare snaps rise and fall in waves, teaming up with convoluted arpeggios to intone a chorus of asymmetrical excellence. The band's bio is not far off the mark, describing their calculated and sharply executed music as imelodic algebraic rock. Timber! falls somewhere between the innovation and precision of The Cancer Conspiracy and the detuned suave of Shiner. However, if the gods are truly good, Timber! will stick around quite a bit longer than their doomed contemporaries.

- Dave Kargol



TOXIC NARCOTIC
SHOOT PEOPLE NOT DOPE
RODENT POPSICLE
Toxic Narcotic. What can be said? These crusty hardcore punk kings demolish all with this little five-song gem, a nice follow-up to 2002's devastating WE'RE ALL DOOMED and a welcome offering to placate our TN fix till they put out their next full-length. Packed with enough harsh, abrasive music and blatantly honest and ugly lyrics to bring the uninitiated to tears, SHOOT PEOPLE NOT DOPE (released on the band's own label) is a bludgeoning, mind-blowing record doused in blistering guitars, gruff, primal vocals, and sick double-bass drums. The real anomaly of the EP, the finale, a remix of "Cockroach", sees TN alternating between mellow reggae beats and sick, super fast and chaotic hardcore punk as they warn of the pending third world war and, ultimately, the end of the human race. Buy this record (and for a delightfully harrowing experience, see these guys live).

-Janelle Jones



TRYST
KIDS OF BIG STARS
MH RECORDS
No matter how hard I tried, I just couldn't get into KID OF BIG STARS. It starts off way too slowly and low key. By the time I got to "Jayne Wright", which is one of the better tracks on the album, I wanted to turn it off. This brand of sentimental and light-hearted and sounding pop music is something your parents would probably enjoy a lot more than you would. Sure, it may be witty and well-crafted, but Tryst's KIDS OF BIG STARS doesn't pack any punch at all. These are songs that belong on a light rock station.

-Dane Jackson



UNSAANE
LAMBHOUSE
RELAPSE
Mighty underground noise-rockers Unsane's (think Helmet, Sonic Youth) unusually stoic and unsettling musical career has been documented in LAMBHOUSE, a CD and DVD retrospective. Brace yourself for the trio's eclectic usage of low bass rumblings, jagged guitar riffs, and overall musical chaos, as this kind of primal potency can't be found on anything you're used to today. 24 tracks in all (not counting what's on the DVD) will leave you bruised, strung out, and exhausted (in that order), as this collection successfully documents and provides a soundtrack for the hopeless and helpless feelings every human goes through at one time or another. www.relapse.com

-Mike SOS

wannabe reviewer: chad



CDS IN MY PLAYER THIS MONTH: Tom Waits-Nighthawks at the Diner, The Cure-Head on the Door, Babes in Toyland-Spanking Machine, Cyndi Lauper-She's So Unusual, Talking Heads-True Stories
BEST GIFT FOR VALENTINE'S DAY IS: A royal flush in the suit of hearts! Poker romance.
I LOVE: Days I'm not bored, the sound of loud guitars, when jerks fail, my unemployment checks, sleeping for as long as possible.



UTAH!
PLAYS WELL WITH OTHERS
BIFOCAL MEDIA
Knowing this band has performed with the likes of the Murder City Devils, Promise Ring, The Mercury Program, and Guided by Voices will give one a pretty good idea of their collective sound, although it can't really be pinpointed until having heard PLAYS WELL WITH OTHERS. Utah! is a mixture of restrained but tight guitar, drums, and cello, with some interesting rock 'n' roll vocals thrown in. It may seem as if this would sound somewhat thrown together, but it works, and it works well. "New Porch" is a prime example where all four elements of the band blend into a very intriguing track. This is merely a cross-section of the record, as it is filled with these kinds of interesting harmonies, cello runs, and guitar subtleties. The band knows what the hell they're doing, which is good, considering the original direction they have taken.

-AC Lerok



VARIOUS ARTISTS
AGAINST POLICE INJUSTICE
NON-COMMERCIAL RECORDS
This 25-band comp disc (which includes such bad-ass punk and cool rock bands as Against Mel, MDC, F-Minus, and World/Inferno Friendship Society) is aimed at raising money for a decent defense team for Ahmad Nelson. Mr. Nelson is accused of killing an off-duty police officer, but the facts seem to be pocketed in pursuit of a conviction. Support justice in America and get a rocking-as-hell disc. Do what you can to make this country live up to the promise of equality and justice for all.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



VARIOUS ARTISTS
THE ROCKY HORROR PUNK ROCK SHOW
SPRINGMAN RECORDS
If you have a strange fascination with men who dress like women, then this is the album for you. If you like Groovie Ghoules, The Ataris, or Swingin' Utters then this is the album for you. I, for one, cringe at the thought of having to watch THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW. The idea of having to listen to an entire album based on the movie made me reach for the Prozac out of the medicine cabinet. Before I committed myself to death, I thought I should at least give the album a try. I tried, and obviously I am still here, so it wasn't that bad. I dig a bunch of the bands on this album, so it was interesting to hear their take on the old soundtrack. You should probably check this album out before you buy it. Go to their Website at www.springmanrecords.com

-Ian Wilkins 420



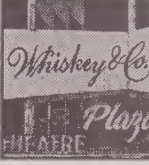
VOLCANO, I'M STILL EXCITED!!
SELF-TITLED
POLYVINYL RECORDS
Here we have 16 inventive and pop-fueled tracks of indie rock. Inspired by acts like Elvis Costello and Death Cab for Cutie, the trio behind VOLCANO, I'M STILL EXCITED!! have truly captured an original sound without sacrificing any catchiness or feat not every band can accomplish. Their weapons of choice are simple: a keyboard, guitar, and double-bass drum. You aren't going to hear extremely complex song structure, powerful guitar, or intricate drum work here, but you will get serene vocals, pleasant harmonies, and something to shake your money-maker to! Oh, and let me not forget to mention their excellent musicianship, with all three members playing together very well. There is no reason why this debut album will not put these guys in the forefront of the indie-rock scene.

-Anthony



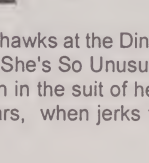
VICTIMZ OF SOCIETY
VICTIMZ OF SOCIETY
TEAT
Remember seeing the cool punk band in the high-school gym when you were 16 the day you snuck your first swig of beer from some skank's 40-oz. bottle? Well, Victimz of Society is that band, and while much of the album's content (including the gross-out skits) is as nostalgic and irrelevant as much of your high-school stint, it does have some merit for provoking that ever-nagging spirit to pogo around the room every now and again, such as with the fantastically-titled "Miss America Sucks". It's music to satisfy the need to laugh and dance like you're 16 again.

-Mike SOS



WHISKEY & CO.
WHISKEY & CO.
NO IDEA RECORDS
This is some foot-stomping shit. Whiskey & Co. should be touring with The Reverend Horton Heat, for sure. Sit back in your most comfy chair, grab three fingers of some good old Jack Daniel's, and light your pipe, as it is definitely time to mellow when you put this CD on. It's got a groove that reminds me of Johnny Cash. The self-titled CD covers all the basics: a love lost, drug addiction, and (of course) the need for some type of escape we all feel at one time or another. In their bio, it reads: "Recommended for folks who have a hankering for: Not getting nails hammered into their heads and Getting nails hammered into their heads." So if you fall into either one of those categories, go to www.noidearecords.com.

-Ian Wilkins



WOLVERINE
COLD LIGHT OF MONDAY
EARACHE
It takes until about midway through the second track "Sarah" for the full band to kick in, and even then there's still an uneasy feeling given off by six-piece outfit Wolverine. While COLD LIGHT OF MONDAY won't overpower you with muscular music, the ambience of tracks like "The Final Redemption" and "Red Canvas" akin to works of Opeth with a more familiar feel should hold you in long enough to feel the weight of the world squarely fall on your shoulders. Even though this album is as much fun to listen to as going to a wake (complete with organ, at times), it does its job by putting a little bit of despair back in your heart. www.earache.com

-Mike SOS



WORDBUG
LOSING IT ALL
BOSS TUNEAGE RECORDS
Another compilation of tracks I can't help but call mediocre. This 20-track album includes the band's LP, singles, and unreleased music off of the second Wordbug album (which to this day has yet to be released). I can't say that I am disappointed, though. I do find the band tolerable and much more pleasant than many others I have heard, but they are missing a certain lure-unique-ness, perhaps-to rush me to pop the album back into my CD player.

-Donna Delshad

i wrote better lyrics in third grade.



**WORDS AWAY
THESE PAST WEEKS
BOSS TUNEAGE**

Words Away is a three-piece, fast-paced punk band with no frills but the music itself. Driving guitars, pounding bass lines, and speedy percussion mixed with a bit of Hot Water Music are what you'll find on this album. The vocals seem hidden on many of the tracks, mixed too far beneath the instruments, so that it almost feels as if there is a lack of confidence in the vocals on many of the tracks. Boss Tuneage has produced another promising melodic pop/rock band. This album

is mediocre, yet the band has much promise. Words Away could be one release away from a great album.

-Kevin Conway

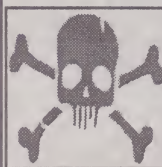


**WORN THIN
REMNANTS OF WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN
YOUNGBLOOD**

Compiling two of their previous 7's and two unreleased tracks (including a cover of Minor Threat's Little Friend), as well as a CD-ROM video for here's the door, this electrifying full-length showcases Worn Thin's enthralling, aggressive brand of DC hardcore perfectly. Drenched in full-on speed, crunchy guitars, plenty of shout-alongs, a formidable rhythm section, and impassioned vocals spouting out personal lyrics, this is a must-have for any self-respecting fan

of high quality hardcore.

-Janelle Jones



**YEAR FUTURE
YEAR FUTURE
GOLD STANDARD LABS**

As time goes on and all conceivable sub-genres swell with product, it seems that the bar is both continually raised and obscured, and that the ability to create unique music perpetually becomes more and more tricky. Year Future don't appear to mind the challenge. Their electrified rendition of jittery noise-pop screams FIRE from some shadowy and overlooked corner of the contemporary sound catalog, asking for attention in the way that rioters ask for TV sets. Their

songs are slick with a semi-traumatizing sense of urgency that leaves the unsuspecting listener scrambling to decide whether or not to start a pit, bust a move, or run like bloody hell. On this self-titled EP, gritty shouts mingle with garbled guitars and keyboards while beats thump steadily, seemingly oblivious to the pandemonium they're propelling. This gloom-punk venture into punk experimentalism will crack you like a chocolate-covered brick.

-Dave Kargol



**ZAO
LEGENDARY
SOLID STATE**

Zao is that band that did it all way before the people you thought did it first, although the ever-changing band lineup, coupled with other woeful music industry tales, kept the outfit away from the recognition it deserved. LEGENDARY is a collection that documents all the trials and tribulations of this revolutionary metalcore band, highlighting an eight-year span of relentless touring, gut-wrenching records, and untested loyalty to its vision of putting out uncompromisingly advanced work. If you're not sure who this band is and what

they've done to merit calling a greatest hits (of sorts) collection, then strap on your headphones and listen to the savagery of such tracks as "Ravage Ritual" and "The Race of Standing Still". Then, check your pulse and you'll know why everyone from Deftones to Avenged Sevenfold owes this band a thing or two. www.solidstaterrecords.com

-Mike SOS



**ZEBRAHEAD
MFZB
EGG/COLUMBIA/RED INK**

So it turns out Goldfinger (minus the ska), Blink-182 (the early years), and that rapper guy from Linkin Park all donated sperm into the same cup. A surrogate mother was chosen, and nine months later Zebrahead was born (in '96). They released PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR in '00, which was their breakthrough record. In the three years between the two records, they wrote and recorded 90 songs, then picked their favorite 15 for MFZB, an album named after their

fan club. The songs are basic, ear-friendly, and ready to be stuck young teenagers' heads for weeks at a time. Fans of the prepackaged, Good Charlotte type of music (but with an "urban" edge) will eat this up.

-Joe Wilson



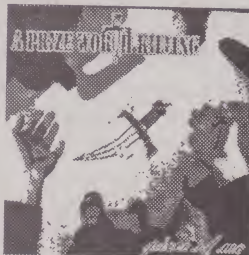
**ZENO TORNADO AND THE BONEY GOOGLE BROTHERS
DIRTY DOPE INFECTED BLUE GRASS HILLBILLY HOBO
XXX COUNTRY MUSIC
VOODOO RHYTHM**

"Before I was sick I was drunk / Before I was drunk I was high / Before I was high I was stoned / Before I was stoned I was 12 years old," sings the Swiss-born Zeno Tornado on this album's first cut of boot-stomping twang (simply entitled "High"). After one glance at the album's title and cover art (which bears the likes of a syringe, smoking gun, spiked woman, and many a scattered pill), one should

realize that its opening words are perfectly par for the course. Here, Zeno and the Boney Google Brothers set down the combread long enough to tap out 14 smoking bluegrass anthems about almost every vice imaginable. Each aspect of this dirty square dance is, however, completely solid, the musicianship is flawless, and the spirit is irreducibly fun. Just keep it locked away until the kids are asleep.

-Dave Kargol

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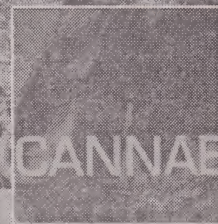
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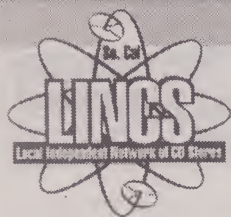
Horror

The second installment of aural obliteration from Boston metalcore tyrants Cannae. Produced by Adam P. (Killwitch Engage)



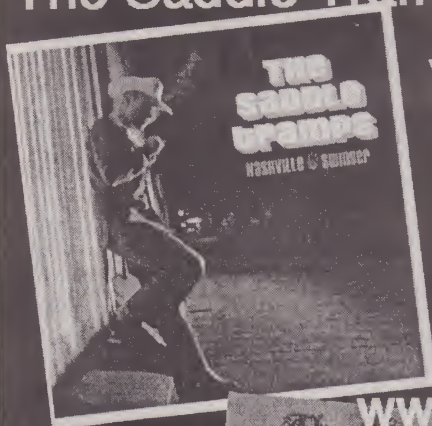
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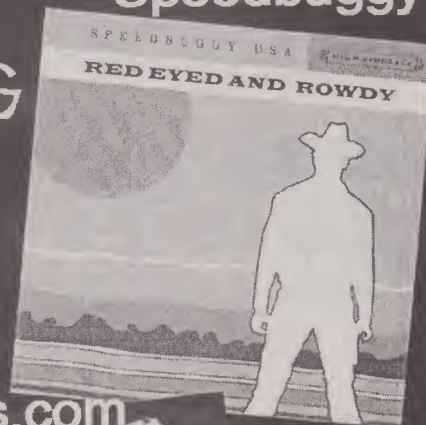
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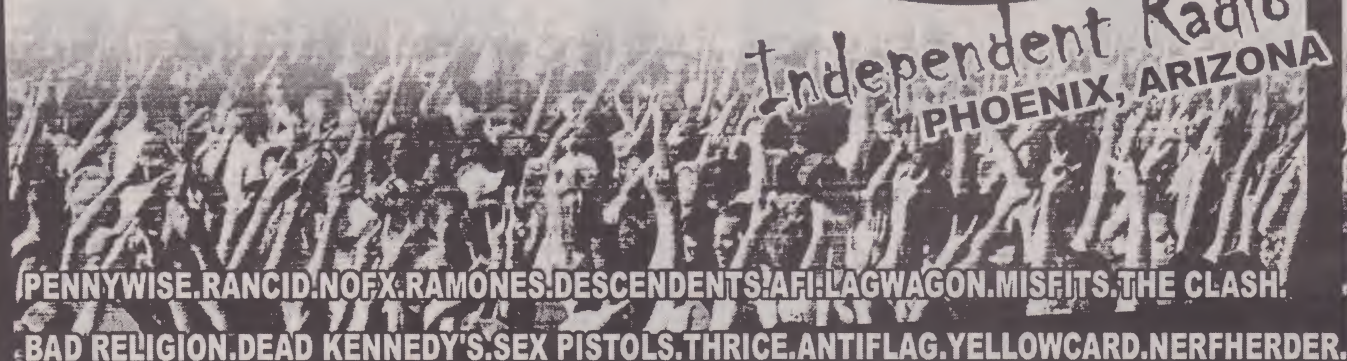
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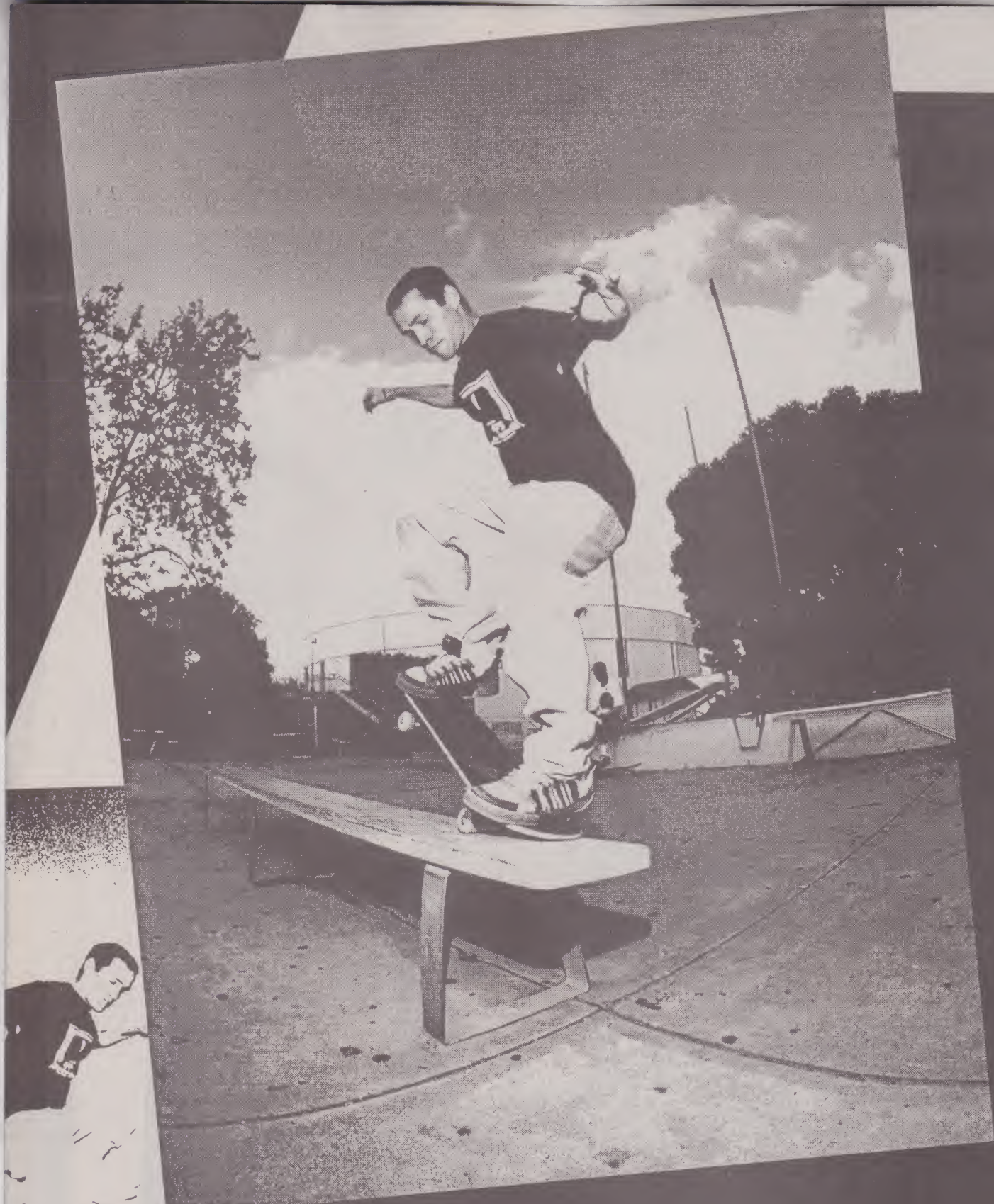


PHOTOS BY MATT FISHER



Bob BURNQUIST / crazy-ass air 1998 X GAMES

[illegible]



Jason MAXWELL / Switch nose grind

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Point Loma High /// School in San Diego, CA.



PHOTO BY VEERO D / VEEROPHOTO.COM

Tommy BUDJANEC / Switch backside tail slide



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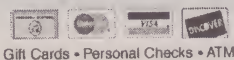
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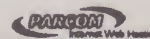
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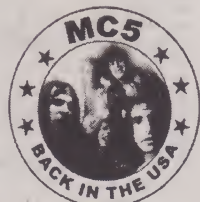
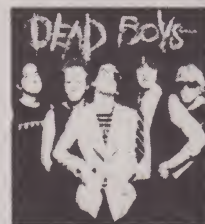
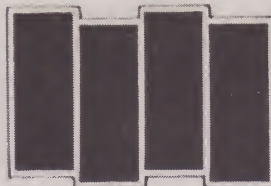
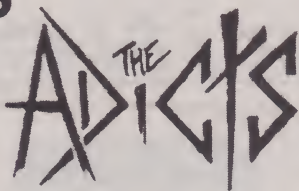
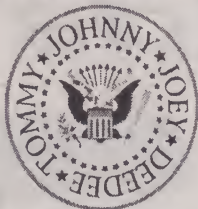
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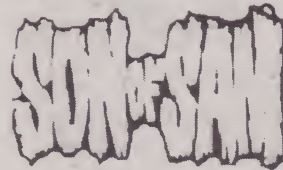
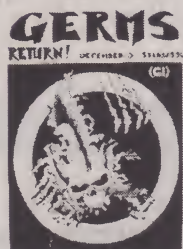
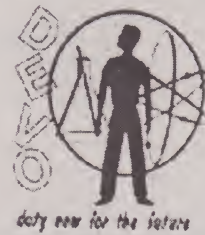
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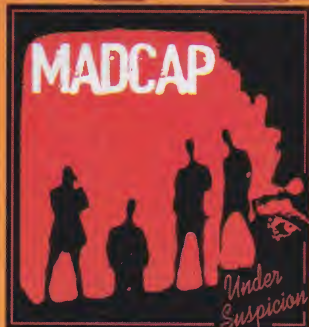
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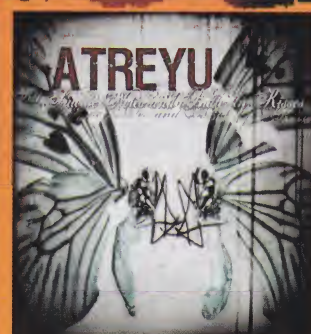


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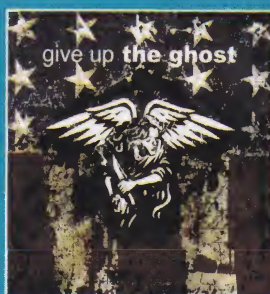
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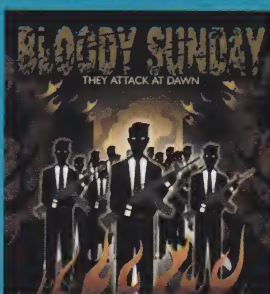
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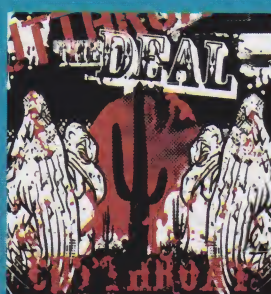
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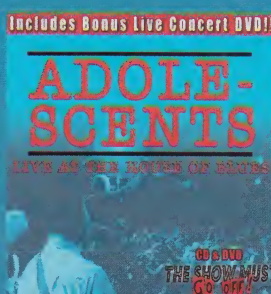
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